Gal. 8 V e

# AN
# ENQUIRY
# INTO THE
# Cauſe and Origin
# OF
# Moral Evil.

In which the preſent State and Condition of Mankind is conſidered and explained, upon the true Principles of Morality and Revelation; and the Objections of the antient and modern Defenders of the *Manichæan* Scheme, particularly Mr. *Bayle*, fully anſwered.

Being the Subſtance of Eight SERMONS Preached at the Pariſh-Church of St *Mary le Bow*, in the Year 1720, at the Lecture founded by the Honourable *ROBERT BOYLE*, Eſq;

---

By *JOHN CLARKE*, D. D.
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majeſty.

---

ISAIAH, V; 3, 4. *And now, O Inhabitants of Jeruſalem and Men of Judah; judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my Vineyard.*

*What could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it ſhould bring forth Grapes, brought it forth wild Grapes?*

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St *Paul's* Church-Yard. M DCC XXI.

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22

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

# RICHARD,

*Earl of* Burlington:

The Right Reverend Fathers in God,

CHARLES, *Lord Biſhop of* Norwich,
EDMUND, *Lord Biſhop of* Lincoln,
SAMUEL, *Lord Biſhop of* Carlile,

AND

WHITE, *Lord Biſhop of* Peterborough,

TRUSTEES

Appointed by the Moſt Reverend Father in God, THOMAS, late Lord Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, the laſt ſurviving Truſtee Named

BY THE HONOURABLE

*Robert Boyle*, Eſq;

This Diſcourſe is moſt humbly dedicated.

FH
MVSEVM
BRITANNICVM

# THE
# PREFACE.

*AS the true Way to judge of the Beauty and Perfection of the* Natural *World, is to examine into thoſe Laws by which Material Things are at preſent governed, and ſee what the Effects of them are; and not to* *depend upon the Hypotheſes of natural Philoſophers: So likewiſe the true Way to judge of the Harmony and Excellency of the* Moral *World, is to conſider the Powers and Faculties of intelligent Agents, and to find out what the proper Application of them is, and what the Reſult thereof muſt be; and not to rely on the Syſtems of moral Philoſophers. Whoever goes upon this Foundation, will quickly be convinced, that the whole Creation was not only made, but is ſtill governed, by an infinitely wiſe and good Being; who, according to the different Circumſtances of Things and*

*Conditions of Perſons, regulates them in the beſt Manner poſſible for the Benefit of the Whole. This, the Founder of theſe Lectures,* the Honourable Robert Boyle Eſq; *(whoſe great Skill in natural Philoſophy, and thorough Knowledge of the ſacred Writings of revealed Religion, rendred him a very proper Judge,) was ſo ſenſible of, that He inſtituted theſe Lectures on Purpoſe to have this Point clearly proved, and the Objections of all Sorts of Perſons fully anſwered. The Prevalency of Moral Evil under the Government of a wiſe and good Being, has al-*

ways been eſteemed one of the greateſt Difficulties: And Men who have been Enemies to all Religion, have taken Advantage of this, to endeavour to perſuade Mankind that all Things are under a fatal Neceſſity, and conſequently that Vertue and Vice are only mere empty Sounds. I have endeavoured in the following Diſcourſe, to diſcover the Weakneſs of theſe Mens Arguments; and to give ſuch a Repreſentation of the State of Mankind, by examining the natural Principles of which Men are compounded, and comparing them with what is ſaid in Scripture concerning them; as *may be ſufficient to evince, that Man is the Workmanſhip of an infinitely perfect Being, who has done and continues to do for him All that is wiſe and juſt and fit: Which is enough to ſatisfy all reaſonable and ſincere Perſons. But the Extravagancies, and Demands of unreaſonable Men; as there is no End of them, and no Bounds to be ſet to them; ſo, in the Nature of Things, it is impoſſible to ſatisfy them. In this Enquiry, I have kept as cloſe as I could, to the Deſire of the Honourable Founder,* viz. not to deſcend to Controverſies that are amongſt Chriſtians; *And* *therefore I have taken my Account from Experience and Obſervation, and from what is expreſsly aſſerted in Scripture agreeable thereto, without entring into any particular Syſtems or Deductions. If what I have ſaid, may any way anſwer the great Deſign of the worthy Founder, and promoted the Intereſt of true Religion; I have my End.*

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Ad-

# *Advertiſement.*

AN Enquiry into the *Cauſe* and *Origin* of *EVIL*. In which the Principal Phænomena of Nature are explained according to the true Principles of Philoſophy; more particularly in Anſwer to Mr *Bayle* and other Defenders of the antient *Manichæan* Scheme of two independent Principles. Being the Subſtance of Eight SERMONS preach'd at the Pariſh-Church of St *Mary le Bow*, in the Year 1719. at the Lecture founded by the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Eſq;. By *John Clarke*, D. D. Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majeſty.

The Truth of the Chriſtian Religion. In Six Books, by *Hugo Grotius*. Corrected. and illuſtrated with Notes, by Mr *Le Clerc* To which is added a Seventh Book concerning this Queſtion, *What Chriſtian Church we ought to join our ſelves to*; by the ſaid Mr *le Clerc*. *The Second Edition, with Additions.* Done into *Engliſh* by *John Clarke*, D. D. Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majeſty.

*Both Printed for* James Knapton, *at* the
Crown *in St* Paul's *Church-Yard.*

# OF THE ORIGIN OF *Moral Evil.*

*The Introduction.* OF all the Arguments made uſe of by the Oppoſers of a Deity and Religion in every Age, there are none which they themſelves think more concluſive, or that they have had better Succeſs with, than thoſe drawn from the Conſideration of the preſent State and Circumſtances of the World, with Relation both to *Things* and *Perſons* ; the natural *Imperfections* of them, and the *Abuſes* they are moreover liable to. The Reaſon of which is not, that ſuch Arguments are really in themſelves more ſtrong and convincing ; but 'tis owing to other very different Cauſes ; The chief of which are,

*The Ignorance of the generality of Men on this Subject.*

*Firſt*, The Ignorance of the generality of Men on this Subject. There are very few, who have any Diſpoſition or Inclination at all towards it ; And of them that have, it requires more Time and Pains than they are willing to allow themſelves, to acquire ſuch preparatory Knowledge as is neceſſary to ſatisfie their Minds in this Particular. Such Perſons therefore may very eaſily be confounded with the Objections raiſed by thoſe who have greater Knowledge in theſe Matters than themſelves; and if they have not a great Care, may be impoſed upon by falſe though ſpecious Concluſions, which may lead them into Error and perhaps into Vice alſo. The only Remedy in this Caſe, is; not to ſuffer plain Things to be affected by thoſe that are obſcure; not to forſake an evident Truth, or depart from a certain Practiſe, on the account of ſome diſtant Conſequences which others pretend to draw, but which we our ſelves cannot ſee. The ſame Prudence is requiſite in Matters of Religion and Morality, as in the common and ſecular Affairs of Life. Every Man's bodily Senſes (if the Organs of Senſation are not by Violence abuſed or deſtroyed) are ſufficient by the common Laws of Nature to diſtinguiſh the Objects proper to them, and to ſee the Relation which they bear to each other. And the ſame is true of the Faculties of Mens Minds. There are none of ſo weak and ſhallow a Capacity (unleſs by ſome Diſtemper or Misfortune, which is out of the Caſe,) but that they can, in the common Inſtances of Life, diſtinguiſh *Truth* from *Falſehood*, *Right* from *Wrong*, and the like. The Rule therefore is very plain and obvious, and what every one naturally falls into. If the Eye be not infected with any Diſeaſe, if the *Object* be in a true *Poſition*, and has a ſufficient Quantity of *Light*, there is no Danger of being impoſed upon with Reſpect to Colours; and we may venture to truſt the moſt illiterate Perſon, with the utmoſt Cunning and Sophiſtry that Wit and Learning can ſuggeſt, to perſuade him that there is no Difference between blue and red, green and yellow. But though it be thus under the forementioned Circumſtances, yet there are other Circumſtances in which the Caſe is very different; A diſeaſed Eye may repreſent all Objects of the ſame Colour, a falſe Light may confound them with one another; or they may be ſo mixed and blended together, that it may be very difficult to tell what Species to rank them under. But this does not alter the general Rule, and would be thought a very weak Argument to prove that all Colours are alike, and that, becauſe we may eaſily miſtake in one Caſe, therefore we may as eaſily be impoſed upon in the other. The Evidence of what we do plainly diſcern, is not in the leaſt diminiſhed by what we do not ſo plainly ſee; the former, Men naturally guide themſelves by, and the latter they ought either wholly to neglect, or elſe to be very careful leſt they be impoſed upon. And the ſame Argument holds with Reſpect to moral or religious Truths, and the Practice conſequent upon them. Thus there is no Man, who takes ever ſo ſlight a View of the Heavens and the Earth, but He muſt ſay with Reſpect to the former, that the Sun was made to rule the Day, and the Moon and the Stars to govern the Night; and with Regard to the latter, according to St. *Paul*, * *That the Rain is ſent to do us good, in procuring fruitful Seaſons, and to fill our Hearts with Joy and Gladneſs.* Theſe are Teſtimonies which no Man in his Senſes can deny; The moſt corrupt and degenerate Ages of the World have been forced to ac-

knowledge

* Acts, *ch.* xiv. *ver.* 17.

knowledge ſuch undeniable Evidence: This therefore muſt not be parted with upon any Account. Whatever Difficulties may ariſe from other Conſiderations, they cannot ſhake this Foundation; for it is laid in a Rock, Proof againſt all Winds and Storms. All ſuch Perſons therefore as have either not Abilities or not Opportunities of particularly examining into the Works of Nature, or the preſent Condition of Mankind, ought to reſt ſatisfied with that Meaſure of Underſtanding which God has given them; to apply it ſincerely to every Thing that comes within their Sphere of Action; and not to be at all ſhaken by Difficulties which their Faculties do no more extend to, than their Eyes do to very diſtant Objects, whoſe Shape or Figure though they may have a general Notion of, yet they cannot particularly determine.

*The Difficulty of this Subject.*

*Secondly*, Another Reaſon why Arguments that are drawn from the ſeeming Imperfections and Defects obſerv'd in the natural and moral World, are ſo plauſible; is the real Difficulty in the Subject it ſelf. The Extent of the Creation is ſuch, that the moſt enlarged humane Underſtanding cannot poſſibly comprehend the Whole of it. The Parts of it are ſo numerous and different; the Laws they are ſubject to, ſo various, according to their ſeveral Poſitions and Circumſtances; in a Word, the Reſpects and Relations they bear to each other, and the Connexion and Dependance they have upon what is already paſt and ſtill to come, is ſuch; that all the Aſſiſtance and Improvements our Faculties are capable of, is not ſufficient fully to explain all the Particulars. But this is a Difficulty common to all Arts and Sciences whatſoever, and lies in the Nature of the Things themſelves, which is no Way to be prevented; For finite Knowledge and limited Power cannot come up to infinite Exactneſs; they can only approach nearer and nearer to the eternal and unerring Rule of Perfection, the groſs Lines of which we can but faintly deſcribe. Thus there is room for the wiſeſt Architect to be continually inventing and improving the Art of Building; Study and Experience ſuggeſt variety of new Beauties and Conveniences to him; and the modern Improvements in Mathematicks and Philoſophy ſufficiently ſhow the fruitful Nature of Things, that they are inexhauſtible in their Relations and Conſequences.

quences. It is not therefore to be wondred at, that weak and finite Underſtandings ſhould be oftentimes puzzled and perplexed upon ſuch Subjects as theſe; it is what cannot be ſuppoſed to be otherwiſe, without deſtroying the neceſſary and eſſential Properties of Things, and taking away all Poſſibility of any finite Beings exiſtſting, of how high a Rank or exalted Underſtanding ſoever; So that Objections of this Kind do not at all affect either the Things themſelves, or the Creatour of them. We ſee it plainly in humane Arts and Sciences; It caſts no Reflection on a Maſter-Builder, in the Judgment of wiſe and judicious Men, that there are many Parts of his Fabrick, which to them who are not skilled in Architecture, ſeem inconvenient, uſeleſs and perhaps irrregular.

And in the Science of Mathematicks, a Man may ſee the Demonſtrations of many Propoſitions; and yet there may be many more ſo abſtruſe, that he cannot comprehend them. Neither of theſe Difficulties are thought really to affect the Art or Science themſelves, nor the Perſons concerned in them. The Rules and Propoſitions are nevertheleſs true, though they be not underſtood by every one; and That Wiſdom and Skill which is built upon them, is nevertheleſs certain, though not comprehended by the Vulgar. The ſame may be affirmed of the Works of the Creation, and the Wiſdom of Providence. The Rules by which the *material* and *intellectual* Beings are governed, are regular and uniform, ſuch as are fit to be preſcribed to ſuch Subjects; and the Difficulties which ariſe in any complex Caſe, all the Particulars of which we have not Means of knowing, do not affect the Rules in general, nor thoſe other Particulars that are plain and demonſtrable. Thus for Inſtance, all the Motions of the primary Planets are exactly accounted for by the Law of Gravitation; but it is very difficult to explain the Motion of the ſecondary ones, eſpecially where there are a Number of them, by the ſame Law, becauſe their Motion is ſo much compounded: Yet no Aſtronomer doubts but the ſame Law obtains amongſt Them, and that every Irregularity is the genuine Effect of this Law. And if any Perſon had Sagacity enough to explain all theſe, there might be ſtill more complicated Inſtances, which would exceed his Underſtanding; in the ſame manner as if a Man ſhould complain that his Eyes would only take in Objects at a Mile's Diſtance, and not at the Diſtance of the Moon: If this latter had been granted him, the Foundation of complaining had been ſtill the ſame; becauſe his Eyes would not extend to the fixed Stars. There is no End of ſuch Kind of arguing as this; it is wholly beſide the Queſtion. That which ought to ſatisfy every ſerious Perſon is, that there are Marks of Wiſdom and Goodneſs evident in numberleſs Particulars to the meaneſt Capacity, upon the leaſt Attention, of which they are as ſure as that they have any Faculties of Diſcernment, or that there is any real Difference in the Nature of Things. And the further ſuch Enquiry is made, and the more nicely the Creation is examined into, the more does the Evidence increaſe; ſo that the real Difficulty lies only in the Diſproportion of our intellectual Faculties which are limited, to the Relations of Things which are boundleſs. All therefore that is our Duty or that we can do in this Caſe, is to make the beſt Uſe of that Meaſure of Knowledge and Underſtanding which God has given us; to apply the reſpective Powers and Abilities of our Minds to their proper Objects, and to be continually improving and enlarging them. If we be ſincere and induſtrious herein, we ſhall quickly be convinced, that the Frame and Conſtitution of the Univerſe was originally made, and is ſtill governed, by the niceſt Rules of Wiſdom and Goodneſs; and we ſhall not be at all ſurpriſed or confounded at the Objections raiſed by irreligious or prophane Men, on the Account of the Irregularities and Diſorders obſerved in it. It is not ſufficient to weaken the Whole, that they can produce ſome very complicated Inſtances, which we cannot perfectly account for. Nothing leſs can make good their Argument, than ſhowing the abſolute Inconſiſtency and Contradiction of ſome Things to the clear Ideas we have of Order and Wiſdom. But the Method of ſuch Perſons is, for the moſt part, juſt the contrary. They ſingle out the moſt perplexed Caſe: And becauſe the Boundary betwixt *Good* and *Evil*, *Right* and *Wrong*, is very narrow and hard to be diſtinguiſhed; they therefore endeavour to render it inviſible, and then argue from that which is obſcure to that which is plain: Juſt as if a Man ſhould affirm, that there is no Difference betwixt

*Sweet* and *Bitter*, becauſe they may be ſo mixed together that the niceſt Taſte cannot tell which prevails. The direct contrary to this, is the true Method not to be deceived, *viz.* to begin with what we are ſure cannot poſſibly impoſe upon us; and to examine whatever appears difficult, by thoſe Rules which are plain and certain. And though perhaps we ſhall not be able to comprehend the Whole, yet we ſhall ſee enough to ſatisfy us, that it is the ſame Wiſdom that governs the Whole, and that *that* Part which we do not underſtand, is not defective, but that 'tis wholly owing to our own Weakneſs and Short-ſightedneſs that we can ſee no further. St. *Paul*'s Compariſon is very juſt here, I *Cor.* xiii. 11. *We know only in part, we ſpeak and underſtand and think as Children; but when we become Men,*

*Men, we ſhall put away childiſh things.* All our Knowledge is but comparative; the Reaſon of Things will unfold itſelf proportionably to the Enlargement of our Faculties; and we may go on to Eternity without exhauſting the Subject. With this View it is, that I have undertaken to examine the Subject of *Natural* and *Moral Evil*, and to enquire into the Cauſe and Origin of each of them, ſo far as we have ſufficient *Data* from Experience and obſervable Phænomena. The Method I at firſt propoſed was, to conſider,

*Firſt*, The Nature of thoſe *Laws* by which the material World is at preſent governed, compared with other Laws, which it was originally equally capable of; whence the *Weakneſs* or *Perfection* of them might plainly appear; and from which ariſe all the

*Wants* and *Imperfections* in *our ſelves* and the *Things* about us; ſuch as the not having at all, or the not having to that Degree which other Beings have, certain Powers, Faculties and Excellencies.

*Secondly*, As a Conſequence of *Theſe*, I propoſed to conſider the Foundation of all *natural Evils*, ſuch as *Diſeaſes*, *Pain* and *Death*, &c. which *Men* and all other *Creatures* are ſubject to: And all kind of *Diſorders* and *Irregularities* in the Things without us, as *Storms*, *Tempeſts*, *Earthquakes* and the like.

*Thirdly*, I propoſed alſo to examine into the Cauſe of *Moral* Evil; and to ſee from whence ſpring all thoſe *Sins* and *Vices*, which we find committed by *Men* every Day, and which render them ſo corrupt and miſerable. All which was undertaken, in order to make appear the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God in the Works of the Creation; that the *Whole Syſtem* is as perfect and compleat as it was intended to be; the ſeveral *Parts* of it endued with ſuch *Powers* as they were beſt capable of; and ſubject to ſuch *Laws*, and placed in ſuch *Order*, as is moſt conducive to obtain the reſpective Ends propoſed by them: And that *all*, that in the nature of Things was poſſible, is done, to *prevent* or *provide* againſt every *Evil* or *Inconvenience* that under ſuch Circumcumſtances might happen: And conſequently all the *Errors* that are, being regular; and the genuine Effects of Things being governed by general Laws, caſt no Reflection on the Excellency of the Workmanſhip, nor the Wiſdom of the Author. So far as relates to the Origin of *Natural Evil*. I have taken a brief Survey of the Material World, and conſidered diſtinctly the principal Parts of it, what the proper *Ends* and *Uſes* of them are, and what *Miſapplications* and *Abuſes* they are conſequently capable of. From which Compariſon it is very evident, that *every thing* that can be ſuppoſed to exiſt from the higheſt to the loweſt, is equally the Object of Creation or Production, to infinite Power; That it belongs to *Wiſdom* and *Goodneſs* to determine *which* and *how many* of all the poſſible Variety ſhall actually exiſt, and alſo to determine every particular *Circumſtance* and *Manner* of their Exiſtence. And as there is a real and eſſential difference in the nature of ſuch things, ſome being capable of Powers and Properties which are inconſiſtent with others; all that we can conceive infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs and Power in Conjunction, to do in regard hereto, is, to propoſe particular *Ends*, and to ſubordinate every Part with ſuch Properties and Powers, as may in the moſt effectual manner produce thoſe *Ends* to a general and univerſal *Good*. Thus *Matter* is the Object of Creative Power, as are alſo the Degrees of thoſe *Powers* which it is capable of; But the particular *Quantity* of Matter, with the particular *Form* and *Manner* it now ſubſiſts in, and the *Laws* of Motion to which it is ſubject, *Theſe* all are the effect of Choiſe, and can be determined only by the *End* they ſerve. It is impoſſible for our narrow Capacities in this *Synthetic* way, to ſay *which* is beſt upon the Whole, unleſs we could in one View compare all the Variety which *is* in the infinite and eternal poſſibility of Things; *We* muſt begin at the other End, *viz.* in the *Analytic* method, with thoſe things which are plain and obvious, and by degrees advance to others more complicated; and ſo, as St *Paul* in another Caſe expreſſes it, † *reach forth unto thoſe things which are before, and preſs towards the Mark* which is infinitely perfect and compleat. But though we cannot thus form a Judgment of the *Whole*, we can yet obſerve the difference of the Parts, and have hereby ſufficient ground to pronounce of *thoſe* which we have not Means of knowing, that they are of a piece with what we do know, and belong to the ſame univerſal Rule. All that Matter is capable of in its own nature, is Extention, Solidity, Diviſibility and the like, which make it the Subject of all

imaginable

† Phil. iii. 13.

imaginable variety of Figure, Motion, and Order or Texture. Whence in order to the Compoſition of the preſent material Syſtem, nothing more ſeems neceſſary to account for all the Phænomena, but that the conſtituent Particles of it ſhould be indued with particular *impulſive* or *receſſive* Forces, which acting according to the Rules of Mechanicks, produce regular Figures and other proper Effects; and conſequently that every *natural Evil* or *Diſorder*, is ſuch as flows from the comparatively imperfect nature of the Subjects, or from their being governed by certain and ſtated Laws: So that ſuch Evils could no otherwiſe have been prevented, but by ſuppoſing that it is inconſiſtent with an infinitely Wiſe and Powerful Being to create any ſuch thing as *Matter* at all; or that it is poſſible for ſuch a Being to give to Matter ſuch Powers as are contradictory to, and inconſiſtent with the nature of it; or elſe that it is ſuitable to ſuch a Being, perpetually to interpoſe and in a miraculous manner interrupt that Courſe of things which himſelf has preſcribed, rather than permit them uniformly to proceed to their reſpective Ends. Every one of which Aſſertions is very abſurd, and contrary to the Idea's we have of infinite Power and Wiſdom. And the ſame may be affirmed of thoſe Powers and Principles, which are not *Mechanical*; ſuch as are the Cauſes of *Vegetation* and *Animal Life.* They are capable but of certain Degrees of Perfection, beyond which nothing can in reaſon be expected, as I have ſhewn in the particular Inſtances.

I ſhall purſue the ſame Method in the preſent Inquiry into the Cauſe and Origin of *Moral Evil*; by conſidering diſtinctly,

*Firſt*, The *Powers*, *Faculties* or *Perfections*, which belong peculiarly to *Man*; and the *Degree* and *Extent* of them.

*Secondly*, What are the proper *Objects* of ſuch *Powers* and *Faculties*; and wherein conſiſts the Nature of *Vertue* and *Vice*, moral *Good* and *Evil*. And

*Thirdly*, What are the proper *Motives* and *Inducements*, and how to be applied, ſo as in the moſt effectual manner poſſible to procure and promote the Practiſe of *Moral Good* or *Vertue*, and to hinder or prevent the Practiſe of *Moral Evil* or *Vice*. From which Conſiderations it will appear how it is *poſſible* for ſuch

Creatures to commit Sin, and what is the Cauſe of the *actual* commiſſion of it; notwithſtanding the Creator is infinitely good. And from hence we ſhall be enabled to anſwer ſuch Objections as are uſually made againſt the preſent Conſtitution and Government of the *moral World.*

*Objections of the Heathen Moraliſts.*

The Sum of theſe Objections is expreſſed by the Platonick Philoſophers in this plain and ſhort Quære, * *Whence is Evil, when every thing that God does is Good.* But the Epicureans were more large and particular, whoſe Senſe is given by † *Lactantius* in the following words. *God,* ſays *Epicurus, is either willing to aboliſh all Evils, but not able; or, He is able but not willing; or, thirdly, He is neither willing nor able; or elſe, laſtly, He is both able and willing. If He is willing and not able, He*

* See Maximus Tyrius Diſſert. 25.

† De Ira Dei. Cap. 13.

*is a weak Being; which is not agreeable to the Notion of God. If He is able and not willing, He is an envious Being; which is no leſs diſagreeable to the Notion of Him. If He is neither willing nor able; He is both a weak and an envious Being, and therefore not God. If He is both willing and able, which is the only thing that is agreeable to his Nature, then Whence come Evils? Or why does He not aboliſh them?* The ſame Objection is urged by the Academick in *Tully*, in a ſomewhat different manner, thus. The Perſon who repreſents the *Stoick*, having produced a large Catalogue of the moſt flagrant Crimes, committed by Perſons * of each Sex, of every Age, in all Places and of all Profeſſions, and with the higheſt Aggravations, aſcribes the Cauſe of them to Mens abuſing That Faculty of Reaſon, which is the Gift of God, and beſtowed on Man as a ſpiritual Patrimony for the improving and advancing his intellectual Nature. To which the *Academick* replies; that, granting it to be ſo, it appears in Fact, that there are ſo few who make a right uſe of their Reaſon, compared with thoſe who abuſe it; † *that God had done better by Mankind, never to have given them any Reaſon at all, than to give them it attended with ſuch pernicious Conſequences: In the ſame manner, as it is better in a Phyſician not to give his Patient Wine, which is ſometimes, but very ſeldom, good for them; than to run the hazard of almoſt cer-*

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* Sentit domus uniuſcujuſque, ſentit forum, ſentit curia, campus, ſocii, provinciæ, ut, quemadmo-

dum ratione recte fiat, ſic ratione peccetur. *De nat.Deor.L.* 3. § 27.

† Ut ſatius fuerit nullam omnino nobis a Diis immortalibus datam eſſe Rationem, quam tanta cum pernicie datam. *Ibid.*

*tain Death, for the very uncertain hope of Recovery.* And becauſe He foreſaw what Reply would be made to this; *viz. Does not God do well by us, becauſe we abuſe the Benefits He confers on us? Are Fathers unkind to their Children in leaving them their Eſtates, becauſe many of them ſquander them away?* therefore He goes on to obviate this by ſaying, * That ſuch Compariſons will not hold; that if God had intended the greateſt Miſchief to Man, he could not more effectually have done it; Wherefore had he conſulted their Good, He ſhould have prevented this Abuſe, and given them only ſuch good Reaſon as ſhould have driven away all Evil. For as He has all Knowledge, ſo

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* Non enim ut patrimonium relinquitur, ſic Ratio homini eſt Beneficio Deorum data. Quid enim potius hominibus dediſſent, ſi iis nocere voluiſſent? Injuſtitiæ autem, Intemperantiæ, Timiditatis quæ ſemina eſſent, ſi his vitiis Ratio non ſubeſſet? *Ibid.*

He could not but foreſee every thing that would come to paſs. And as He has † all Power, ſo as to be able to effect any thing without any Labour or Pains by his mere Will; He could have hindred it. And the Concluſion this Man draws, is this, * *That either the Supreme Being does not know the Extent of his own Power; or He has no Regard to the Affairs of Mankind; or elſe He cannot judge what is beſt for them.* Thus the Philoſophers of old, vainly reaſoned concerning the Adminiſtration and Government of the moral World. The general Fallacy of whoſe Arguing, appears from hence.

First,

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† Nihil eſt quod Deus efficere non poteſt & quidem ſine labore ullo: ut enim hominum membra, nulla contentione, mente ipſa, ac voluntate moveantur; ſic numine Deorum, omnia fingi, moveri, mutarique poſſe. *Ibid.* § 39.

* Itaque aut neſcit quid poſſit, aut negligit res humanas, aut quid ſit optimum non poteſt judicare. *Ibid.*

*The Weakneſs of the Epicurean Arguments.*

Firſt, In the *Epicureans*, their Arguments, if they prove any thing, prove too much, *viz.* That there ought to have been no finite or created Beings at all. For if the true Notion of God be, that He is to exerciſe his Power and other Attributes in only the higheſt Inſtance that is poſſible, it is manifeſt that thoſe Perfections being infinite in every reſpect, the Object of them muſt be ſo too; Which deſtroys the Foundation of different Orders or Degrees of Beings, and takes away his Liberty of communicating Inſtances of Goodneſs to them, proportionably to their ſeveral Capacities, and as He ſees fit. Whereas the true Notion of God, from the Obſervation of his Works, and from the Variety of thoſe Beings which we ſee do actually exiſt, is; that there ſhould be different Species of Beings;

ings; the Faculties, Abilities and Circumſtances of which, ſhould alſo be very different; and conſequently the Exerciſe of his Power and other Attributes towards them, be proportioned to their reſpective Capacities, and in ſuch a manner as He himſelf thinks moſt conducive to attain the End propoſed.

*The Weakneſs of the Arguments of the Academicks.*

The latter Arguments, of the *Academicks*, are rather oratorical and poetical Deſcriptions, than Arguments; and are calculated more to excite the Paſſions and captivate the Imaginations of the Vulgar, than to convince the Reaſon and ſatisfy the Judgment; And conſiſt chiefly in repreſenting Things in the worſt light with the moſt affecting Expreſſions. The ſame Genius could have taken the other ſide of the Queſtion, and rendred it altogether as plauſible. So that in this reſpect they may be ſet, the one againſt the other.

But, to allow them their utmoſt force; they are, at beſt, either 1*ſt*, Arguments *ad ignorantiam*, and prove only that humane Capacity is very ſhallow, and not that the Reaſon of Things it ſelf is abſurd. For as, in the *natural World*, ſome of the antient Aſtronomers invented very abſurd Hypotheſes to ſolve the Phænomena of Nature, and then complained of the Author of it; whereas the true Fault was their Ignorance of the real Laws by which it was governed: So upon due conſideration it will appear in the *moral World*, that the proper Objects are no leſs duly proportioned to the *intellectual* and *rational* Faculties; and that there are *Laws* as agreeable to *them*, and *Motives* as much ſuited to *incline* them, as the Proportions and Relations of Things are fitly ſuited in the material Syſtem. And conſequently *Here* alſo every thing is according to juſt Weight and Meaſure.

Or elſe 2*dly*, Theſe Objections are Arguments drawn from the natural *Imperfections* of finite intellectual Powers and Capacities: And like the foregoing Arguments of the Stoicks, if they prove any thing, they prove too much; *viz.* that it were better to be without ſuch Faculties, than to have them ſo capable of being abuſed. Which is a Contradiction to the very Suppoſition of them; For they cannot be in any Degree, but they muſt in the Nature of the Thing be liable to proportionable *Abuſes*, as ſhall be more fully made appear afterwards.

*Objections of the Moderns againſt*

And that we may not omit any thing that is thought material, we will ſtate the Caſe in the Words *the Syſtem of the Moral World.*

of a *Modern* Advancer of the Manichean Scheme, who pretends to have repreſented it in ſuch a manner as to render it unanſwerable. The Arguments made uſe of by *Him* are of two Sorts; Firſt, ſuch as are drawn from the *natural* Notions we have of God, according to the Principles of Reaſon and Philoſophy; and Secondly, ſuch as are drawn from the Repreſentation made of the divine Attributes and Perfections, in the *Scriptures* of the Old and New Teſtament. The Sum of the former is comprehended in theſe Words: * *According to the Rules of Philoſophy it may be maintained, that if it be repugnant to the Nature of God to produce Sin, it is repugnant to the ſame Nature to produce*

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* *Entretiens de Maxime & de Themiſte*, p. 142. Pendant qu'il voudra philoſopher on lui ſoûtiendra que s'il repugne a la nature de Dieu de produire le pechè, il repugne à la mème nature de produire des

*Creatures who will infallibly produce Sin under thoſe Circumſtances in which He choſe to place them: For according to our moſt diſtinct Ideas, it is altogether the ſame thing to commit Murder one's ſelf, as to put a Man into ſuch Circumſtances in which we certainly know He will be killed.*

And again in another* Place to the ſame purpoſe; *If we depend only upon one Cauſe, Almighty, infinitely good and infinitely free, and which diſpoſes univerſally of all Beings according to the Pleaſure of his own Will, we ought*

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creatures qui produiront le pechê infalliblement, dans les circonſtances qu'il leur choiſira. Car ſelon nos idées les plus diſtinctes, c'eſt toute la même choſe, commettre, un meurtre ſoi-même, ou faire trouver un homme dans les circonſtances où l'un ſait certainement qu'il ſera tué.

* *Bayles* Dictionary, under the Word *Paulitiens*, *Remark E.* Car ſi nous ne dependons diront ils (les Pauliciens) que d'une Cauſe toute puiſſante, infiniment bonne, infiniment libre, & qui diſpoſe univerſellement de tous les êtres ſelon le bon plaiſir de ſa volunté, nous ne devons ſentir aucun mal;

*ought not to feel any Evil, all our Good ought to be pure, and we ought never to have any thing to diſtaſte us. The Author of our Being, if He is infinitely beneficent, ought to take a continual pleaſure in making us happy, and preventing every Thing that may diſturb or diminiſh our Joy; for this is a Character eſſentially contained in the Idea of Supreme Goodneſs.* The other Arguments taken from the Scripture-Repreſentations of the preſent Circumſtances of Mankind, and the Method of God's Dealing with them, are ſuch as theſe. † *According to the Scripture* (ſays He) *there is but one good Principle, and yet moral and natural Evil have been in-*

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tous nos biens doivent être purs, nous n'y devons jamais trouver le moindre degout, &c.

† *Ibid. Remark E.* Il n'y a, ſelon l'Ecriture, qu'un bon Principe; & cependant, le mal moral & le mal phyſique ſe ſont introduits dans le genre hu-

main : il n'eſt donc pas contre la nature du bon principe qu'il permette l'introduction du mal moral, & qu'il puniſſe le crime, &c.—— Mais le peuvent-elles etre ? (viz. les Raiſons *a priori* refutées ?) Oüi, repondrai-je : la maniere dont le mal s'eſt introduit ſous l'empire d'un ſouvereignEtre infiniment bon, infiniment ſaint, infiniment puiſſant, eſt non ſeulement inexplicable, mais même incomprehenſible ; & tout ce que l'on oppoſe aux raiſons pourquoi cet Etre a permis le mal, eſt plus conforme aux lumieres naturelles, & aux idées d' l'ordre, que ne le ſont pas ces raiſons.

*troduced among Mankind: It is not therefore contrary to the nature of a good Principle, to permit the Introduction of moral Evil, and to puniſh Crimes. —— I will anſwer, yes: The manner of introducing Evil, under the Empire of a Sovereign Being infinitely good, infinitely holy, and infinitely powerful, is not only inexplicable, but incomprehenſible. And what has been objected againſt the Reaſons why this Being has permitted Evil, is more agreeable to natural Light, and to the Ideas we have of* Order, *than theſe Reaſons are.* And

* a little after, He ſays with reſpect to our firſt Parents; *That it cannot be conceived that the firſt Man could receive from a good Principle the Faculty of doing ill. This Faculty is vicious; and every thing that can produce Evil, is bad, ſince Evil cannot proceed but from a bad Cauſe.—— And 'tis impoſſible to comprehend that God did only permit Sin; for a bare permiſſion of Sin, added nothing to Freewill; nor was it a Means to foreſee whether* Adam *would perſevere in his Innocence, or fall from it.* And in another † place, ſpeaking of the Diſputes a-

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* *Ibid.Remark F.* On ne conçoit pas que le premier homme ait pu recevoir d'un bon principe la faculté de faire le mal. Cette faculté eſt un vice: tout ce qui peut produire le mal eſt mauvais, puiſque le mal ne peut naitre que d'une cauſe mauvais &c. – Et il eſt impoſſible de comprendre que Dieu n'ait fait que permettre le peché; car une ſimple permiſſion de pecher, n'ajoûtoit rien au franc arbitre, & ne faiſoit pas que l'on peût prevoir ſi Adam perſevereroit dans ſon innocence, ou s'il en decherroit, &c.

† *Ibid.* Le principe unique que vous admittez, a voulu de tou-

mongſt Chriſtians upon this Head, and their ſeveral Hypotheſes and Explications of it, He has the following Words. *The only Principle which you admit, willed from all Eternity, according to you, that Man ſhould ſin; that this Sin ſhould be infectious; that it ſhould produce, without End and without Intermiſſion, all imaginable Crimes over the Face of the whole Earth. In conſequense whereof, he prepared for Mankind in this Life, all the Miſeries that can be conceived; ſuch as Peſtilence, War, Famine, Pain, Vexation; and after this Life,*

te éternité, ſelon vous, que l'homme pechât, & que le premier peché fût une choſe contagieuſe; qu'elle produisit ſans fin & ſans ceſſe, tous les crimes imaginables ſur toute la face de la terre; en ſuite dequoi il a preparé au genre humain dans cette vie tous les malheurs qui ſe peuvent concevoir, le peſte, la guerre, la famine, la douleur, le chagrin, & aprés cette vie un enfer où preſque tous les hommes ſeront éternellement tourmentez, d'une maniere qui fait dreſſer les cheveux quand on en lit les deſcriptions, &c.

*Life, a Hell, wherein all Men almoſt ſhall be eternally tormented, after ſuch a manner, as makes one's Hair ſtand on end, when one reads the Deſcription of it. If ſuch a Principle is otherwiſe perfectly good, and loves Holineſs infinitely; muſt we not acknowledge, that the ſame God is, at one and the ſame time, perfectly good and perfectly bad, and that He loves Vice no leſs than He does Virtue?* Theſe are the chief Arguments made uſe of by this eminent Defender of the Manichæan Scheme: which that I might not miſrepreſent, I have given you in his own Words. Now though theſe Arguments are pretended to be drawn from the Conſideration of the preſent State and Practice of Mankind with regard to moral Evil, as an unanſwerable Objection againſt the World's being governed by one

Principle, infinitely powerful, wiſe and good; yet notwithſtanding all their boaſted Strength, they will appear, upon ſtrict Examination, to be built upon no better Foundation than thoſe of the antient Epicureans and Academicks.

*Defects and Irregularities in the Moral World, not inconſiſtent with the natural Notions we have of God.*

For *firſt*; As to thoſe Arguments drawn from the *natural* Notions we have of God, according to the Principles of Reaſon and Philoſophy; *theſe*, far from teaching us that it is inconſiſtent with the Notions we have of an infinitely powerful, wiſe, and good Being, that there ſhould be any Defects or Irregularities in the *moral World*; ſhow us evidently on the contrary, that in the Nature of things ſuch Defects *will* be; they are the unavoidable reſult of things being finite and limited: Elſe there muſt have been no ſuch Creatures at all, endued with thoſe Faculties and Powers which we obſerve in them; or no general and regular Laws preſcribed for their Direction; For every one of theſe in any Degree whatſoever, ſuppoſes a poſſibility of deviation, and conſequently that *Sin* may be introduced into the World; And infinite Power, Knowledge and Goodneſs, can do no more than is compatible with the State and Capacity of the Subject. Philoſophically ſpeaking therefore, there can be no ſuch thing as *Impeccability* in any created Being, of how exalted a Station ſo ever; for it will always be *poſſible* that limited Underſtandings may be deceived, and the Actions conſequent thereupon not according to the exact Rules of Truth and Right. This is well expreſſed in the Book of Job, Ch. xv. 15. *Behold, He putteth no truſt in his Saints,* *yea, the Heavens are not clean in his Sight; how much more abominable and filthy is Man, which drinketh* Iniquity *like Water*? Since therefore finite intelligent Beings neceſſarily ſuppoſe *Peccability*; the different Degrees and Kinds of which, are, according to their diverſe States and Conditions, more or leſs perfect, when compared together; but bear no proportion to Infinity: Either we muſt ſay, that it is inconſiſtent with the Idea we have of the Supreme Being to create any Thing ſuperior to Stocks and Stones, or indeed any thing at all; or elſe that He is at perfect Liberty to create What Sort of Intelligent Beings He pleaſes, to place them in ſuch Circumſtances as He thinks moſt proper and ſuitable for them, and to regulate them by thoſe Laws which He ſees beſt upon the Whole.

There is no Medium betwixt theſe two. This our * Author himſelf ſeems to have been aware of, and to acknowledge the Conſequence of it, *viz.* that the Univerſe is but *one* Being; and every thing contained in it, Part of that Being; and all the Motions and Actions belonging to any of them, the neceſſary Effects of That Being. For thus He ſays in the forecited place: *According to the Idea we have of a created Being, we cannot comprehend that it can be a Principle of Action, that it can move it ſelf; and that, receiving in*

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* *Pauliciens*, *Remark* F. Outreque par les Idées que nous avons d'un être créè, nous ne pouvons point comprendre qu'il ſoit un principe d'action, qu'il ſe puiſſe mouvoir lui-même; & que recevant dans tous les momens de ſa durée ſon exiſtence, & celle de ces facultez; que la recevant, dis-je, toute entiere d'une autre cauſe, il créé en lui-même des modalitez par une vertu qui lui ſoit propre. —— La creature ne pouvant donc pas être mué par une ſimple permiſſion d'agir, & n'aiant pas elle-même le principe du mouvement, il faut de toute neceſſité que Dieu la meuve; il fait donc quelque autre choſe que de lui permettre de pecher.

*every moment of its duration, its Exiſtence, and the exiſtence of its Faculties wholly from another Cauſe, it ſhould create in it ſelf any Modalities by a power inherent in it ſelf.* ——*Seeing therefore a Creature cannot be moved by a mere permiſſion of acting, and has not in it ſelf a Principle of Motion; it is abſolutely neceſſary that God ſhould move it. He muſt therefore do ſomething elſe than barely permit Man to ſin.* What is all this, but openly confeſſing that it is a Contradiction in the Nature of Things to ſuppoſe God can make any Creatures at all, endued with Liberty or a Power of moving themſelves; and that what we call *Action* is merely *Paſſiveneſs*, being acted upon; and that God is directly the *immediate* Cauſe of every thing that is done. The unavoidable conſequence of which is, that *Men* and all other ſuperiour, as well as inferiour *Creatures*, are not real Beings or diſtinct Subſtances; have properly no Exiſtence at all, but are only Modes of the Deity; or at leaſt, that they are without any *Underſtanding* or *Liberty* of their own; and therefore, being only mere *Machines*, they are abſolutely uncapable of *Good* or *Evil*, *Virtue* or *Vice*, and can neither be rewarded nor puniſhed for what does not belong to them; but every thing is to be aſcribed to the one Principle, who is the ſole Author of all Actions, and in whoſe Hands all things are mere Inſtruments. This is juſt ſuch a way of arguing, as it would be in regard to the *material* World, because ſome of the Phænomena are difficult to be accounted for, therefore to aſſert that there is no ſuch thing as *Matter* or *Motion* exiſting at all;

but that they are only mere Ideas or imaginary Repreſentations in our own Minds, without any Thing external to anſwer them. I don't ſee how it is poſſible to argue about ſuch Hypotheſes; it can only be referred to the Experience and common Reaſon of Mankind to determine in ſuch Caſes. For even in Mathematical Demonſtrations, which are the moſt ſtrong and concluſive, there muſt be ſome Poſtulata, ſome ſimple Truths known by *Intuition*; which whoever pretends not to allow, is uncapable of ſeeing any Deductions from them. And ſo it is in the Caſe of *Morality*; There muſt be ſome firſt Principles, ſome *immediate* Objects of the Underſtanding, as eaſy to be taken notice of, and diſtinguiſhed by it, as natural Objects are by the bodily Senſes. And it is altogether as vain to attempt to argue with any Perſon who ſees not the difference of ſuch intellectual Objects, *viz.* moral Good and Evil; as it would be to diſpute with a blind or a deaf Man about Colours and Sounds. Unleſs therefore it could be ſhown, that it implied a plain Contradiction to ſuppoſe any ſuch thing as finite created Beings, endued with Underſtanding, Liberty, or a Power of acting, and ſuch like Faculties of the Mind; it muſt be granted *poſſible* that ſuch Beings may exiſt; that is, that they are the Objects of Power, and depend upon the Will of the Supreme Being. But as to their *actual* Exiſtence, together with all the Circumſtances of them, this cannot be determined otherwiſe than by *Experience*; and to *that* we muſt appeal. And ſo plain and evident it is in theſe Particulars, that we may venture to ask any One who pretends to be diffident herein, what greater Evidence He could deſire upon ſuppoſition the thing were true, than we now have, that Man is an *Intelligent* and *Voluntary Agent*. Upon which Foundation alone the Whole of Morality is built; For this is the Corner Stone, which if once removed, the whole Fabrick immediately falls to the Ground. Wherefore, as in the *natural* World it muſt be taken for granted, or left to the Criterion of every one's Senſes, whether there be any ſuch thing as *Matter*, and what particular Laws of Motion it is ſubject to, before we can pretend to make appear the Excellency and Goodneſs of the Creation; ſo likewiſe in the *moral* World muſt it be taken for granted, that by what every Man feels within himſelf, and obſerves in others, Mankind are *Intelligent* and *Voluntary* Agents. And upon this Suppoſition, the true Method of Inquiry, in order to judge of the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of the Creator, and the Excellency and Perfection of the Creature; muſt be to examine the particular State and Condition of ſuch Beings, what Laws they are ſubject to, and under what Obligation to obſerve them. Had our Author purſued this Method, He would have ſeen, that beſide the *Abſurdity* of introducing two Principles in order to account for the Phænomena of *moral Evil*, there is no *occaſion* for them; but that things may be better ſolved without them; and that his own Method leads directly to an abſolute Fatality, which is the ſame as Atheiſm.

*The Weakneſs of thoſe Arguments pretended to be drawn from Scripture.*

*Secondly*, As to the other Arguments, taken from the *Scripture*-Repreſentations of the preſent Circumſtances of Mankind, and the Method of God's dealing with them; it may be obſerved, that they are founded either upon ſome Rhetorical or Allegorical Expreſſions; or that they relate to ſome Cuſtom or generally received Opinion which prevailed and was well underſtood at that time and in thoſe Places, but perhaps is very difficult to underſtand perfectly now; or elſe they are built only upon mere Hypotheſes, and are nothing but humane Fictions, as are many of the Doctrines of the modern Schoolmen; which are ſo far from being clear Deductions from Scripture, that they are utterly inconſiſtent with it, and no leſs repugnant alſo to common Senſe and Reaſon. All Arguments of this Kind, are only mere Abuſe of the Scripture, and return upon the Heads of thoſe who make Uſe of them. For theſe Books of Scripture have at leaſt the common Right of all other Books, and ought to be read impartially, and with the ſame View of underſtanding and applying what is contained in them; which is no way really affected by the Abuſe of weak or prophane Men. Thus thoſe Words of King *David*, Pſ. lviii. 3. *The Wicked are eſtranged from the Womb, they go aſtray as ſoon as they are born, ſpeaking Lies*; have been applyed to all Mankind, repreſenting them as born with a natural and univerſal Corruption and Depravation of the very *Faculties* and *Diſpoſitions* of their Minds, which yet are ſo manifeſtly a Rhetorical Deſcription of the Practice of very wicked Men only, that we may venture to ſay they would never have been miſunderſtood in any other Book. So likewiſe becauſe the *Devil* is ſaid to be the *Prince* and *God* of this World, and repreſented as having great Influence, Power, and Intereſt amongſt Mankind; ſuch kind of Expreſſions have been aggravated ſo as to make him a very potent Being, and, as the forecited Author ſays, abating that He is not eternal and uncreated, very near equal to the Evil Principle of the Manichæans. For, * ſays He; *it has been a conſtant Opinion amongſt Chriſtians from the Beginning, that the Devil is the Author of all falſe Religions; that he moves the Hereticks to dogmatize, and inſpires*

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* *Paulitiens*, **H.** C'eſt une opinion repandue de tout tems dans le Chriſtianiſme, que le Diable eſt l'auteur de toutes les fauſſes religions; que c'eſt lui qui pouſſe les heretiques à dogmatiſer, que c'eſt lui qui inſpire les erreurs, les ſuperſtitions, les

*Men with Errors, Superſtitions, Schiſms, Lewdneſs, Avarice, Intemperance ; in a Word, with all the Crimes that are committed amongſt Men; that he deprived* A-dam *and* Eve *of their Innocency ; from whence it follows, that He is the Cauſe of* Moral *Evil, and of all the Miſeries of Man.* Yet comparing theſe Texts with others which are not figurative, nothing can be more clear, than that the Devil is a Being very little ſuperiour to Man ; That it is from the Similitude which wicked Men bear to him, that they are ſaid to ſtand in ſeveral Relations to Him ; That his Temptations are generally no other than what the common Infirmities and Paſſions of Men, and

Schiſmes l impudicicé, l'avarice, l'intemperance, en un mot tous les crimes qui ſe commettent parmi les hommes: que c'eſt lui qui fit perdre á Eve & á ſon mari l'etat d'innocence : d'où s'enſuit qu'il eſt la ſource du mal moral, & la cauſe de tous les malheurs de l'homme.

the natural Objects which the World affords, expoſe them to; and that ſuch Expreſſions are intended to ſignifie no more, than the *Practice of Sin*, and the general Prevalence of it amongſt Men, whatever the immediate Cauſe or Occaſion of it be. And the ſame may be affirmed of the *Puniſhment* threatned in Scripture to be inflicted in a future State on finally impenitent Sinners. The particular Expreſſions upon This Head, are generally figurative. But One Thing is very clear throughout the whole Scripture, that the unerring Rule of Juſtice ſhall be ſo ſtrictly and impartially obſerved in the final Judgment, that the whole World ſhall approve it, and the Sinner himſelf be forced to confeſs it. Can there be any Doubt, after ſuch an open Declaration, how any obſcure or figurative Paſſages are to be underſtood? With regard therefore to the Explication of Scripture upon the Subject now before us, and as an Anſwer to any Objections drawn from Modern Schemes of Divinity, I lay down the following Rules.

*That the Scripture is a miſcellaneous Book, treating of great Variety of Subjects.*

*Firſt*, It is evident from a curſory View of the Old and New Teſtament, that they are Miſcellaneous Books, containing great Variety of things, and taking in a large compaſs of Time; ſome Parts of which are Hiſtory, others writ in a Poetical Style, and others Prophetical: But the Deſign of them all is profeſſedly to recommend the Practice of true Religion and Virtue. It is with this View therefore that we are to underſtand any Expreſſion contained in them. This Method we naturally take with reſpect to all other Books. No one reads a Treatiſe of Philoſophy, but He expects to find that the Terms mentioned there, be uſed in a philoſophical Senſe; and accordingly He always apprehends them ſo. But if in ſuch a Treatiſe there ſhould *incidentally* be brought in ſomething upon a different Subject, and deſcribed according to the *vulgar* way of ſpeaking, without any regard to *philoſophical* Truth; he would not pretend to explain ſuch an occaſional Diſcourſe in the ſame manner as He did the reſt of the Book. And the like holds true with regard to the Scriptures. They are not Books of Metaphyſicks and Philoſophy, deſigned to entertain Men's Curioſity with nice Speculations; but they are Books of Religion and Morality, calculated for the regulation of Mens Behaviour and Practice.

And becauſe no Language abounds with Words ſufficient to expreſs the Particulars of all Sciences, therefore ſome of them muſt neceſſarily be uſed in different Senſes as they relate to different Subjects. The common People, in thoſe things they are converſant about, and have occaſion to take Notice of, expreſs things as they appear to the Senſes, and not as what in ſtrictneſs and reality they are: Which is ſufficient for the Purpoſes of Life. But whoever would enquire into the Truth of ſuch Things, and examine the Foundation of ſuch Appearances, muſt expreſs himſelf very differently. Therefore there muſt be both a *vulgar* and *philoſophical* way of expreſſing the ſame thing; which whoever confounds or miſapplies, immediately introduces innumerable Abſurdities. Theſe Diſtinctions have place in the forementioned Books; and the not attending to theſe Diſtinctions has rendred many things there utterly unintelligible, and others contrary to Fact and Experience. For want of attending hereto, ſome Perſons have laboured under inextricable Difficulties how to reconcile ſome of the moſt certain Truths in the natural Syſtem of the World, ſuch as the Motion of the Earth and the like, with the Repreſentation made of them in Scripture: Whereas upon this ſingle Suppoſition, that the Scripture is a Book of *Morality* and not of *Philoſophy*, it ought to be very exact in conforming all its Words and Expreſſions to the *moral* or *religious* Senſe of them; but the other being foreign to this Subject, and only occaſionally introduced, there is no need of ſuch Accuracy in them, but they *may* ſafely, nay it would be abſurd if they ſhould *not* be delivered according to the vulgar acceptation of Words, as not being at all intended to inform Men in thoſe Matters. Every Difficulty upon this account immediately vaniſhes.

*The general Deſign of the Scripture is to recommend Morality.*

*Secondly,* The Scriptures being, as was before obſerved, Books of Morality and Religion; it is evident that the Buſineſs of them muſt be to lay down the great Rules and Precepts of Vertue, to ſhow the Obligation Men are under to pay Obedience to theſe Rules, and to recommend them with proper Motives and Inducements. Wherefore they take it for granted, that *Man* is a Subject of Morality; and conſequently they *ſuppoſe* Him to be a Creature indued with *Underſtanding*, whereby He is capable of apprehending the different Relations of Perſons and Things; that He is alſo endued with a Power of *acting* or *not acting*, after He has formed a Judgment of what is fitteſt to be done; which is *Free-Will* or *Liberty*: and alſo that He has in him the Principles of Paſſion, Hope, and Fear and the like, which may be excited by Promiſes and Threats. All the Directions contained in them, are manifeſtly calculated for ſuch a Sort of Being as this; which if *Man* is not, He is wholly out of the Queſtion; they do not then concern him; but his Caſe is, what the Royal Pſalmiſt ſays of a Horſe and a Mule, *He* Pſal. xxxii. 9. *muſt be held with a Bitt and a Bridle, leſt He fall on us.* It cannot therefore be expected, that nice Definitions ſhould be given of the ſeveral Powers and Faculties which are in Men, or their

Differences exactly laid down; nor ought we to imagine that there ſhould be particular philoſophical Proofs of the Exiſtence of ſuch different Powers in the ſame Subject, or curious Diſquiſitions into the Cauſe and Origin of them, or the manner of their Operation; becauſe theſe Things are all foreign to the purpoſe. So that all Queſtions of this Kind, *viz.* Whether *Man* be an intelligent and voluntary Agent; how *Liberty* can be reconciled with the divine *Preſcience*, and the like; cannot be determined from Scripture, becauſe it meddles not at all with them. Every thing There relates to Practice; and whatever the Theory be, ſo it affects not *that*, it is all one. Hence it is that we don't ſo much as find thoſe Words, *Neceſſity*, *Liberty*, and ſuch like, at all uſed in thoſe

Books, at leaſt not in the philoſophick Senſe of them ; but *Man* is deſcribed according to the vulgar and common Apprehenſion concerning him. Thus it is ſaid, *Matt*. xv. 18. *That out of the* Heart *proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, and the like* ; as if the *Heart* were the Seat of the Underſtanding. And St *Paul*, agreeably to the received Notion, diſtinguiſhes Man into two Parts, the *Fleſh* and the *Spirit*, as containing different principles, and governed, by different Laws, *Rom*. vii. 23. *But I ſee* (or *I experience*) *another Law in my* Members, *warring againſt the Law of my* Mind. The *Truth* or *Force* of both which Diſcourſes is not at all diminiſhed, if it ſhould appear, upon philoſophical Inquiry, that the *Heart* is not, properly ſpeaking, the Seat of the Underſtanding ;

ſtanding; or that there might have been a more accurate Diſtinction than that of the Apoſtles into *Fleſh* and *Spirit*. It is no wonder, when Men read the Scripture with ſuch a View as this, that they ſhould be diſappointed; and then triumph in an Abſurdity, which is of their own making. Such Perſons might with as juſt Reaſon expect, in an experimental Treatiſe of Light and Colours, wherein only the different Properties and Effects of them are conſidered, to find particular Proofs that Men are endued with the Faculty of Seeing; and then ridicule it, becauſe it does not anſwer their fooliſh Expectation; whereas That was foreign to the Subject, and no Part of the Deſign.

*Thirdly*, The Scriptures containing in them a Body of Laws or Precepts, for the regulation of

*God is ſuppoſed in Scripture to be the*

*Governour of the World.*

Mens Behaviour in Matters of Religion; it was proper there to conſider Men only as Subjects, as under the Authority of a Lawgiver and a Judge. Wherefore, though theſe Laws are founded in the eternal Nature and Reaſon of Things, this is not particularly inſiſted upon; but they are recommended in a way of Authority, and by ſuch Motives as are peculiar to That, *viz.* by Rewards and Puniſhments. In the ſame manner as in temporal Kingdoms, the ſupreme Authority does not undertake to offer Reaſon and Arguments to convince the Subjects of the Goodneſs and Excellency of the Laws; for This is always ſuppoſed; but only enjoins them poſitively, with proper Puniſhments annexed to the tranſgreſſing of them. So is it here. God is in Scripture conſidered as the *Gover-*

*nour* of the World, and all Mankind as his *Subjects* or *Servants*; and upon This *Relation* is founded all their religious *Duty* or *Allegiance*. They are obliged to *obey*, becauſe *He* commands; ſo that his *Will* is the Rule, and his *Authority* the Ground of their Obedience. Hence it is that in Scripture we find no particular Proofs of the Exiſtence of God, no Demonſtrations of his metaphyſical Nature and Eſſence; becauſe theſe are not the Foundation of the Worſhip there preſcribed. For the ſame Reaſon likewiſe we never here find *Moral Vertue* or *Vice* treated of in the ſame Manner as in other Writers. But as they are here conſidered as ariſing from a different Principle, ſo they have a different Denomination given them. Every Thing here is referred to God, as the original Author and continual Preſerver of all Things; and *they* are repreſented as the Effects of his mere Good Will and Liberality. Wherefore with this View, *Gifts* and *Graces*, and *Talents*, and ſuch like, are the moſt proper Expreſſions to give us right Apprehenſions concerning them; And ſo we find them perpetually called. The *Faculties* and *Powers* of Mens Minds, as they are derived from God, are his free Gift; which He was under no Obligation originally to beſtow, or any longer to continue, than as his own Goodneſs prompted, and Wiſdom directs: And every Inſtance of Help, every Means of Aſſiſtance, natural or ſupernatural, is the Effect of mere Grace or Favour, which Men have no Right to demand. In the Scripture-account therefore of the Original of *Moral Evil*, we muſt expect ſuch a Repreſentation of it, as is agreeable to the profeſſed Deſign of theſe Books; *viz.* to ſhow the Relation and Dependence Men have upon the Supreme Being; and not a ſtrict Philoſophical Account, ſuch as a curious Inquirer into the Works of Nature would give. Not but that *Both theſe* are perfectly agreeable, and indeed are the ſtrongeſt poſſible Illuſtration and Confirmation of each other: But different Ends muſt be attained by diverſe Means, though the Truth be always one and the ſame. Thus Notions of the Perfections of God, taken from the Obſervation of the viſible Part of the Creation, illuſtrate and confirm thoſe given us of Him in Scripture; And the Obligation to the Practice of Vertue, drawn from the Reaſon and Relations of Perſons and Things, is exactly coincident with that of Revelation, and they are only like different Ways which lead to the ſame End.

*The Uſe of Figures and Metaphors in Scripture.*

*Fourthly,* The Foundation of Religion and Vertue being laid in the Mind and Heart; the ſecret Diſpoſitions, and genuine Acts of which, are inviſible, and known only to a Man's ſelf; therefore the Powers and Operations of the Mind, can only be expreſſed in figurative Terms, and ſignified by external Symbols. The Motives alſo and Inducements to Practiſe, are ſpiritual; ſuch as affect Men in a way of moral Influence, and not of natural Efficiency; the principal of which, are drawn from the Conſideration of a future State: and conſequently *theſe* likewiſe muſt be repreſented by Allegories and Similitudes, taken from Things moſt known and familiar here. And thus we find in Scripture the

State of Religion illuſtrated by all the beautiful Images that we can conceive; in which natural Unity, Order, and Harmony conſiſt, as regulated by the ſtricteſt and moſt exact Rules of Diſcipline, taken from thoſe obſerved in the beſt ordered temporal Governments. In the Interpretation of Places in which any of theſe Images are contained, the principal Regard is to be had to the figurative or ſpiritual, and not to the literal Senſe of the Words. From not attending to which, have ariſen all the abſurd Doctrines and Inferences which weak Men have endeavoured to eſtabliſh as Scripture-Truths: Whereas in the other Method of Explication, the Things are plain and eaſie to every one's Capacity, make the deepeſt and moſt laſting Impreſſions upon their Minds, and have the greateſt Influence on their Practiſe. Of this Nature are all the Rites and Ceremonies preſcribed to the *Jews*, with relation to the external Form of religious Worſhip; every one of which was intended to ſhow the Obligation, or recommend the Practiſe of ſome moral Duty, and was eſteemed of no farther Uſe than as it produced that Effect. And the ſame may be applied to the Rewards and Puniſhments peculiar to the Chriſtian Diſpenſation, which regard a future State: The Rewards are ſet forth by ſuch Things as the generality of Men take the greateſt Delight, and place their higheſt Satisfaction of this Life in; and the Puniſhments are ſuch as are inflicted by humane Laws upon the worſt Malefactors: But they can neither of them be underſtood in the *ſtrictly literal* Senſe, but only by way of Analogy, and correſponding in the general Nature and Intention of the Thing, tho' very different in Kind.

*Particular Rites and Cuſtoms frequently alluded to in Scripture.*

*Laſtly*, As all Nations have their peculiar Rites and Cuſtoms, in Religious as well as Civil Matters; and as every Language has its peculiar Propriety and Idiom of Speech; it is impoſſible to underſtand a Diſcourſe relating to a particular People, without ſome previous Knowledge of the Nature of each of theſe. The *Jews*, for whoſe Uſe the Books of the Old Teſtament were chiefly compoſed, were a People diſtinct by themſelves, who had very little Correſpondence or Communication with the neighbouring Nations. Wherefore their Opinions and Doctrines in Religion, muſt be learned from thoſe Writings, and what Hiſtories remain of thoſe Times; by comparing the Expreſſions of different Texts with each other; and not from the Interpretation they will bear compared with Other Languages in Countries whoſe Cuſtoms are very different from theirs. Thus with regard to the Practice of Vertue, and the Commiſſion of Sin; the fundamental Principle of *their* Religion, is, that there is but One God, the original Creator of Heaven and Earth; by whoſe Care and Providence, every Thing in them is maintained and preſerved; Who is infinitely Wiſe and Juſt and Good. From the Conſideration of this ſtrict Connexion betwixt the Creator and the Creature, that they might not derogate too much from Him, nor aſſume too much to themſelves, they aſcribed every Thing that was Good or Vertuous to God; not only the Powers and Faculties of their Minds, but even their voluntary Actions themſelves. So likewiſe, becauſe there is mention made of Certain Angels or ſuperiour Spirits, the Head or Captain of which is called the *Devil* or *Satan*; by whoſe Example, and at whoſe Inſtance, they committed very heinous Sins againſt God, by which they incurred his juſt Diſpleaſure, and were puniſhed in an exemplary manner: hence the *Jews* were led to aſcribe all *Sin* or *Evil* to Him, as if He ſuggeſted every wicked Thought, and diſpoſed every prevailing Temptation to ſeduce them into Sin. Upon this Suppoſition, their Forms of Speech in the Old Teſtament are very plain and intelligible; And the *ſame Thing* under divers Conſiderations may be ſaid in one Place to have God for its Author, and in another

Place be attributed to the Devil; As in the Caſe of King *David*'s numbring the People. With regard to the New Teſtament, nothing can be more evident, than that, though it be wrote in a different Language from that of the Old Teſtament, yet, as the ſame People were principally concerned in it, ſo it is in every Thing exactly conformable to their Notions. The Idioms of Speech are the ſame; every Doctrine or Action is illuſtrated by ſome Cuſtoms which were familiar amongſt them. Wherefore in order to the right underſtanding of the Deſcription of any *Thing*, or the Character of any *Perſon*, or the like, it is neceſſary to have recourſe to the Old Teſtament, and to examine in what Senſe the Phraſes are there uſed, and how applied. Thus in the Inſtance of the Puniſhment threatned to be inflicted on finally impenitent Sinners in a future State; all the particular *Circumſtances of* it, as the *Place*, the *Degrees*, &c. are taken from the known Practiſes of the *Jews*, and conſequently ought to be explained by the Uſages in the Paſſages they refer to. Theſe are the principal Rules with regard to the Interpretation of Scripture; which it was neceſſary to lay down, in order to obviate ſome Difficulties relating to this Subject of *Moral Evil*, which are founded wholly upon Explications of Texts of Scripture in a manner unwarrantable either by common Reaſon, or by the Method of underſtanding any other Books; and in order to ſhow that the Account there given of the preſent State and Condition of Man, and the Method of Providence in its Diſpenſations towards

Him, is perfectly agreeable to the cleareſt Ideas we have of *Good* and *Evil*, and the ſeveral Obligations that a *free* and *intelligent* Agent can be conceived to be under, to conform to the one, and to avoid the other in the general Courſe of his Action.

*From not obſerving the foregoing Rules, have ariſen ſo many Miſinterpretations of Scripture.*

Had the foregoing Rules, with regard to the Interpretation of Scripture, been obſerved in this Inquiry into the Cauſe and Original of moral Evil; all thoſe *Inſinuations* of our *Objector* concerning the Authority and Genuineſs of Scripture, and the Abſurdity He charges the Doctrines of it with, had been intirely prevented. For it is with theſe Books, as with all other things that by a right application may be of Uſe and Service to Mankind: They are in their own nature liable to be miſapply'd, which muſt produce the contrary

Effects; And the greater and more univerſal the Benefit or Advantages that accrue from the right Uſe of them are, the more Inſtances muſt there neceſſarily be, in which they are capable of being abuſed to the Evil and Diſſervice of Mankind. This is the Foundation of all thoſe unreaſonable and contradictory Doctrines, wherewith weak or deſigning Men have impoſed upon themſelves and others, as if they were contained in Scripture. The Conſequences of which Practiſe have been very pernicious to true Religion, and have greatly tended to diminiſh the Authority of thoſe ſacred Writings. For by this ſingle Artifice, have prophane Perſons and Unbelievers in every Age, attempted to undermine the Truth and Excellency of the Goſpel; *viz.* not taking Things as they are there delivered, and impartially inquiring into the Nature and Conſequences of them, but pitching upon ſome particular Scheme of Doctrines invented by Men; and when they have ſufficiently expoſed the Weakneſs of theſe, and confuted the Defenders of them, then they immediately argue from the Fictions of Men to the Doctrines of Scripture, and appeal to the Illiterate and Vulgar, (who are unable to judge of the Diſpute,) whether they have not effectually diſproved the Scripture-Doctrines themſelves. This is a very diſingenuous way of treating any Book whatſoever, and very ill becomes a Perſon who pretends to philoſophize and to inquire ſeriouſly after Truth. And it is ſo much the worſe, as the Things ſearched for, are of the greateſt Importance and Concern to all Men to be ſatisfied in. Such Fallacy as this, may ſerve a particular End or private View for a time; but when once diſcovered, it muſt have the contrary Effect to what it was deſigned for. The real Truth will be more ſtrengthened, and the Abſurdity will light upon the Head of the Oppoſer, in the Eyes of all diſcerning Perſons. This we ſhall find to be the Caſe in the Subject before us. We are often told that the Origin both of natural and moral Evil, can no way be accounted for by the Principles of Reaſon; that it is directly repugnant to the cleareſt Ideas we have of Order; and that to have recourſe to Scripture, is only to ſhelter our ſelves under an Authority, which though not to be oppoſed, yet gives us no real Satisfaction. Thus after a long Inquiry we find the Whole reduced to this (as it is ſtiled) *uſeful* Concluſion, *viz*. * *to humble the Reaſon of Men, by ſhowing them with what Force the moſt fooliſh Hereſies, ſuch as thoſe of the* Manichees, *may confound it, and embroil the moſt fundamental Truths.—What muſt be done then? Men muſt captivate their Underſtandings to the Obedience of Faith, and never diſpute about ſome Things; Particularly, they muſt not oppoſe the* Manichees, *but by Scripture and by the Principle of Submiſſion.* And in another Place †: *The Origin of Evil, the Decrees*

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* See *Bayle's Dict.* under the Word *Paulitiens, Remark F.* Il eſt plus utile qu'on ne penſe, d'humilier la raiſon de l'homme, en lui montrant avec quelle force les Hereſies plus folles, comme ſont celles des Manicheens, ſe jouënt de ſes lumieres, pour embrouiller les veritez les plus capitales.--- Que faut-il donc faire? il faut captiver ſon entendement ſous l'obeiſſance de la foi, & ne diſputer jamais ſur certaines choſes. En particulier il ne faut combatre les Manicheens que par l'Ecriture & par le principe de la ſoumiſſion, &c.

† *Eclairciſſement ſur les Manicheens.* --que l'origine du mal, les decrets de Dieu

*crees of God upon it, and the like are one of the moſt inconceivable Myſteries of Chriſtianity.* What He means by *Myſtery*, He tells us a little before, where He has theſe Words: * *The moſt neceſſary Barrier to preſerve the Chriſtian Religion, is the Obligation to ſubmit to the Authority of God, and humbly to believe the Myſteries that He has been pleaſed to reveal, however inconceivable and impoſſible they appear to our Reaſon.* This (in the Senſe the Author here plainly means it,) is to ridicule the firſt Principles both of *Natural* and *Revealed* Knowledge;

ſur cela, & le reſte, ſont un des plus inconcevables myſteres du Chriſtianiſme.

* De ſorte que la barriere la plus neceſſaire á conſerver la religion de Jeſus Chriſt, eſt l'obligation de ſe ſoumettre à l'autorité de Dieu, & à croire humblement les Myſteres qu'il lui a plu de nous reveler, quelque inconcevables qu'ils ſoient, & quelque impoſſibiles qu'ils paroiſſent à nôtre raiſon. *Which he repreſents as a common Maxim agreed upon by all Divines, Catholicks and Proteſtants.*

and to drive Men to the moſt compleat Scepticiſm and Infidelity.

*The weakneſs and Folly of ſuch miſapplications of Scripture.*

The true Inference that can be drawn from ſuch Inquiries with reſpect to *Natural Knowledge*, is no more than this; that the Capacities of Men are very ſhallow, and the Means of finding out Truth few, compared with that infinite Variety of Relations that Things bear to each other; ſo that the moſt enlarged Underſtanding muſt oftentimes be at a loſs, and not able peremptorily to determine one way or another. But this is ſo far from teaching us *That abſurd* ſort of *Humility* now mentioned, whereby we ſhould renounce our Underſtandings either in Intuitive Knowledge or clear Deductions; that directly on the contrary, it teaches us to place entire Confidence in thoſe Truths, the Evidence

dence of which is plain and ſatisfactory; and encourages us to purſue Others that are more intricate, with all our Diligence; and gives us hopes of the like Succeſs even in theſe alſo. Let us apply this way of arguing, in a parallel Caſe more familiar to us; and the Weakneſs and Folly of it, will be yet more conſpicuous. The Caſe is the ſame with the Faculties of the Mind, as with the bodily Senſes: *Objects* may be ſo placed, either as to their Diſtance or the Magnitude of their Parts, that the niceſt Eye, aſſiſted by all the Improvements of Art, cannot diſcern either their Shape or their Colour; and *Sounds* may be ſo blended together, that the moſt curious Ear cannot diſtinguiſh them. This, in the Words of our Author, is of very good Uſe, to *humble* the *Senſes* of Men, by ſhowing them with what Force ſuch *fooliſh Experiments* confound and embroil the plain Evidence of their Senſes, and make them deny or doubt of all Things. A Man who can be convinced in this manner that He is really blind or deaf, or that there can be no Caſe in which it is ſafe for him to truſt to his Eyes or Ears, becauſe there are many Caſes in which He may be deceived; is beyond the Power of Arguments, and ſo muſt be left to reap the Fruit of his Folly. Had this *notable* Uſe of our Faculties been made by the great Men of this Age; Inſtead of thoſe noble Improvements that we now ſee in Mathematicks and Philoſophy, which convince us more and more every Day of the Certainty and Excellency of ſuch Knowledge, an univerſal Negligence and Contempt of thoſe Studies would have prevailed ; and we had been as ignorant of the Works of Nature and the Beauty of the Creation, as the moſt barbarous and uncivilized Nations are.

Now the Weakneſs of this ſort of Arguing, is juſt the ſame when applied to the *Scripture-Account* of Things, as when applied to *natural Reaſon*. It only ſhows, that they who make uſe of it, have not ſeriouſly nor carefully examined into the *one* or the *other*; but have taken up with ſome Hypotheſis, which upon a near View appeared inconſiſtent and unworthy of God ; and then they condemned his *Works* or his *Word*, becauſe not agreeing with the Fictions of Men. Thus it is with the forementioned Words, *Myſtery* and *Faith*: There is a Senſe in which both theſe Words have been uſed by the Modern Schoolmen, which it is very hard to reconcile with the Reaſon of Things, and the natural Notions we have of God; but then it is altogether as difficult to reconcile it with the plain and expreſs Words of Scripture; ſo that the Truth or Excellency of the Scripture is not at all affected thereby, but only Thoſe Authors themſelves and their Defenders. We find no Command in Scripture to lay aſide our Reaſon or *Underſtandings*; but directly the contrary is there affirmed of the Chriſtian Religion, *viz.* that it is our * *reaſonable Service*: And therefore the Method in which Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught *this Service*, was agreeable to Reaſon, *viz.* by exhorting Men to † *attend ſeriouſly*, to *weigh diligently* their Doctrines and Precepts; ‖ *To ſearch the Scriptures* whether the things were ſo; ‡ *To*

try

* Rom. xii. 1.

† Matt. xi. 15.

‖ John v. 39.

‡ 1 John iv. 1.

*try the Spirits whether they were of God*, and to examine the Evidence for their Authority and Miſſion. Are theſe and ſuch like Expreſſions at all calculated to enſlave Mens Underſtandings, or to induce a blind and implicit Obedience? Such Methods may ſerve the Purpoſes of Superſtition, but true Religion can gain nothing by them. Neither do we find mentioned in Scripture any ſuch *Obligation* as our Author ſpeaks of, of receiving Things that appear impoſſible to right Reaſon. Indeed the direct contrary is There aſſerted, *viz.* that to Chriſtians *it is given to** underſtand *the Myſteries of the Kingdom of God*; and *the* Myſtery *that has been hid from all Ages is now made known.* It is impoſſible for Words to be more plain and explicit than theſe are; So that nothing leſs than a total

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* Matt. xiii. 11. Rom. xvi. 25, 26.

Ignorance of thoſe Writings, or a moſt inveterate Prejudice and Obſtinacy againſt them, could be the Cauſe of ſuch ſhameful Abuſes.

*The Scripture-notion of Faith.*

The Scripture-Notion of *Faith*, is very plain and obvious, *viz.* not a ſpeculative and philoſophical, but a religious and practical Faith. And 'tis built upon this Principle; * *That God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently ſeek Him.* That is, Religious Faith is a full Conviction of Mind, that an eternal, immenſe Being, infinitely Wiſe, Juſt and Good, not only actually exiſts, but is the *Governour* of the World, preſcribes Laws to the Conſciences and to the Actions of Men, takes notice of their compliance with or tranſgreſſion of them, and will certainly reward or puniſh them according as

* Heb. xi. 6.

their Works have been. To live under this Senſe and Expectation, is to live a Life of Faith, and is coincident with a Life of Vertue. All the Species or particular Inſtances of Faith, may be reduced to this, as ſo many Branches ſpringing from it. And to explain them in any other Senſe, as if Faith and Reaſon were oppoſed to each other, and Religion and Vertue were two different Things; is to blind Mens Underſtandings, and to confound the plaineſt and moſt numerous Texts of Scripture.

*The Scripture-Senſe of the word Myſtery.*

The ſame may be ſaid of the Word *Myſtery*. Our Author takes it in a Senſe never uſed in the Scriptures; ſhows the Abſurdity of ſuch *Myſteries*, and then inſults thoſe Writings for what is no where contain'd in them. A Revelation, in the nature of the Thing, ſuppoſes that ſomething with regard to Religion ſhould be diſcovered to Mankind, which they could not find out, or at leaſt be certain of, by the Light of Nature and Reaſon : *viz.* either a new Obligation to perform their Duty, or the Addition of ſome new poſitive Precepts, or a clearer Maniſeſtation of what was before obſcure, whenceſoever that Obſcurity aroſe, *&c.* Theſe and ſuch like, are in Scripture ſtiled *Myſteries* ; not becauſe they are contrary to, or above our Reaſon, and in their own Nature inconceivable by our Underſtandings ; but becauſe they are ſuch Things as Men could not have found out, or been fully aſſured of by their Reaſon, becauſe they depend on the mere Will and Good-pleaſure of God : They are Superadditions to the common Benefits He has given

Mankind by the the eſtabliſhed Courſe of Nature, and therefore are eſteemed extraordinary Acts of Grace and Favour. *Theſe*, when once made known, are as eaſie to be apprehended and applied by the Capacities of all Men, as their natural Gifts and Endowments are; and are ſo far from being inconſiſtent with them, that they are only like a Superſtructure, of a piece with, and built upon the ſame Foundation. The Objections therefore raiſed from the modern Senſe of this word, which is wholly unknown to Scripture, are very weak and fooliſh, and only diſcover the Wickedneſs of Men in attempting to impoſe on one another's Underſtandings, but do not at all affect the Truths themſelves that are revealed. And to appeal to the Books themſelves, whether any ſuch Things be contained in them or no, is the moſt effectual Confutation of ſuch Calumnies.

*A particular Inſtance of Mr* Bayle's *Method of quoting Scripture.*

Of a Piece with theſe, are the ſame Author's Quotations of thoſe Texts of *Iſaiah* and St *Paul.* *Iſaiah* lv. 9. *For my Thoughts are not your Thoughts, neither are your Ways my Ways, ſaith the Lord.* And *Rom.* xi. 33. *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways paſt finding out!* The former of which is alledged to ſhow that * Men cannot at all judge of the Intentions or Methods of Providence, nor ſee wherein the Goodneſs and Excellency of them conſiſt; And the latter, that † *St Paul himſelf propoſed Difficulties, which he could not get out of*

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* See *Bayle's Diſcourſe of the Manichees.*

† Les écrits de Saint Paul nous apprenent que ce grand Apôtre

*of, otherwiſe than by aſſerting the abſolute Power of God over his Creatures, with an Exclamation of the Incomprehenſibility of his Ways.* Nothing can ſtrike more directly at the Root of all Religion, both *natural* and *revealed*, than to aſſert that Wiſdom and Juſtice and Goodneſs in God are of another *Nature* and *Kind*, than the Moral Qualities ſo denominated in Men; and conſequently that they can no way be compared together, nor any Judgment formed of them. If this were ſo, there would be no Foundation in the Nature and Reaſon of Things for Truth and Falſehood, Right and Wrong, which are the everlaſting Rules to which the Supreme Being conforms himſelf; But *equal*

propoſé les difficultez de la predeſtination, ne s'en tira que par le droit abſolu de Dieu ſur toutes les creatures, & que par une exclamation ſur l'incomprehenſibilité des voies de Dieu.

*qual* and *unequal*, and all *Proportions* whatſoever, would be alike, and might be put one for another. Which is ſuch a Contradiction, as He who pretends not to be able to ſee, can no more be ſhown it, than the difference of Colours can be ſhown to a Man that is blind. And there would be no Foundation for thoſe Exhortations in Scripture, ſo often repeated and ſo ſtrongly urged, to * *imitate* the Perfections of God ; to be † *Followers* of Him ; and the like; which would be only empty Sounds without any certain Meaning. This is juſt the ſame Thing, as it would be in a Perſon who ſaw the Force of a Demonſtration in a plain Propoſition in Mathematicks, to affirm that in a more difficult Propoſition (the relation of the ſeveral Parts of which to each other He does not ſee,)

*Proportion*

* Matt. v. 48.

† Epheſ. v. 1.

*Proportion* it ſelf is quite another Thing from what it is in the other. God Almighty ſees at one View all the *Relations* that *Perſons* and *Things* bear to each other; and therefore He exerciſes that Wiſdom and Juſtice and Goodneſs which is founded on thoſe Relations, in the moſt exact manner that is poſſible. Men ſee the ſame Relations but faintly, compare them together but ſlightly, and many times neglect or overlook ſome of the principal of them. Becauſe therefore they fall ſhort of Perfection in Thoſe Vertues, does it follow that they are no Vertues at all? Becauſe they differ infinitely in degree in Men, from what they are in the Supreme Being; are they therefore totally different in kind? It may as well be affirmed that the Light of a Candle is in kind totally different from That of the Sun, and ſuch as would give a Man no Idea of *Light at all*, if He had not ſeen the other; becauſe there is an immenſe diſproportion in Intenſeneſs betwixt them. Alſo that an Inſtance of Mercy ſhewn by one Man to another, is a quite different Sort of Thing from the Exerciſe of that Attribute in God; becauſe the Degree, Extent or Duration, are infinitely diſproportioned. 'Tis manifeſt that the Foundation is one and the ſame; and the Rule exiſting in the Nature of Things, eternal and immutable. And thus it is explained in the forementioned Paſſages of Scripture themſelves; Which could not have been ſo ſhamefully miſunderſtood, but by the Perverſeneſs and Obſtinacy of Men; For the Words immediately following the former Text, as an illuſtration of it, are theſe, *ver.* 9. *For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, ſo are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts than your Thoughts.* Which manifeſtly regards the *Univerſality* and *Extent only*, and not the *Nature* and *Reaſon* of the Things, which are eternal and unchangeable, ſuppoſing the Things here mentioned to be of the ſame *Kind*. But if theſe latter Words are only a Continuation and particular Exemplification of what is ſaid in the 7th *Verſe, Let the Wicked forſake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon* ; then the meaning of them is evidently this : that there is the greateſt difference poſſible, betwixt the *Thoughts* and *Actions* of God, and the *Thoughts* and Actions of wicked Men; and therefore there can be no Reconciliation betwixt them, no room for Mercy and Pardon, without Repentance and Reformation: Which is a Notion perfectly agreeable to natural Reaſon. And *St Paul's* *Exclamation* does no leſs evidently relate to the extraordinary Methods of Providence, or the particular Benefits or Favours, whether temporal or ſpiritual, conferred voluntarily on One People above others, and to which they had no natural Right, but they are a free Addition to the common Benefits of Providence: as in the Caſe of the *Jews*. The Apoſtles Words intimate no more than this; That as ſuch Mercies are voluntary, and proceed ſolely from the Good-pleaſure of God, ſo they muſt all be reſolved into his Will;

it is impoſſible for any Wiſdom of Man, or perhaps any other created Beings, to find out the Reaſon of them, or to determine on whom they ſhall be particularly conferred. Nothing but Revelation can diſcover theſe things; after which they become as obvious as any other Things diſcovered by our natural Knowledge.

I have been thus particular in ſtating the true Rules of interpreting the Phraſes of Scripture, and in giving ſome Inſtances of our Adverſaries Method of quoting and explaining them; that it might the more plainly appear what Sort of Aſſiſtance it is reaſonable to expect from thence in this Inquiry concerning the Origin of Moral Evil; and alſo that it might appear how unfairly the Scriptures are treated, and how ſhamefully they have been miſapplied on this very Subject.

*Of the diſtinct Powers and Faculties of Man.*

I ſhall now purſue the Method I at firſt laid down, by conſidering dictinctly the *Powers*, *Faculties* or *Perfections* which belong particularly to *Man*, and the *Degree* and *Extent of them*. The Caſe is the ſame with Intelligent Beings, and the Faculties they are endued with, as in *material* Things and the Powers belonging unto them. We come to the Knowledge of the Exiſtence of them by Experience and Obſervation only; and theſe ought to be the Foundation of our reaſoning concerning Them, as they are concerning Truths in natural Philoſophy. Every Creature that is poſſible to be made, is equally the Object of Omnipotence; but whether it ſhall actually *exiſt* or no, with the particular Circumſtances of *Time* and *Place*, this belongs to the other Perfections of the Deity to determine. And the like may be ſaid of the Faculties and Powers they are to be endued with, both as to their *kind* and *degree*, if they be not incompatible with the Nature of the Subject, or do not imply any Contradiction. Whereſore as *Space* is immenſe, and *Duration* eternal; God who is infinite in Power, Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and all other Perfections, may of his own good pleaſure chooſe, out of the infinite variety of Beings that are poſſible to exiſt, *which* and *how many* of them ſhall actually exiſt, and allot them their reſpective Stations, and preſcribe them ſuch Laws as are moſt conducive to their general well-being. Agreeably to this Notion we find *That ſmall part* of the Univerſe, in which we our ſelves are converſant, and have the beſt Means of knowing its State and

Condition; we find it to be plentifully ſtock'd with ſeveral Species of Creatures very different from each other, when compared together; having each their peculiar Ends and Uſes, and in ſuch a Subordination as their reſpective Natures would beſt admit of. And that other Parts of the Univerſe ſhould be repleniſhed with Beings of a ſtill Superiour Order, is very reaſonable to conjecture from the Harmony and Analogy of Nature; beſides what is ſaid in Scripture, of Angels and other Superiour Powers. The Fountain is inexhauſtible, and there is room for the Exerciſe of the Perfections of the Deity in every ſuch Manner and in all ſuch Degrees as He himſelf thinks fit to diſplay them. The higheſt Species of Creatures here upon Earth is *Man*, whom the Royal Pſalmiſt gives an exact Deſcription of, *Pſ.* viii. *v.* 5, 6. *Thou haſt made him a little lower than the Angels, and haſt crowned him with Glory and Honour, thou madeſt him to have Dominion over the works of thy Hands, thou haſt put all things under his Feet.* It is neceſſary to have a true Notion what ſort of Creature Man is, what Place He poſſeſſes in the Univerſe, and what Relation He ſtands in to other Beings; before we can judge wherein his proper Excellency conſiſts, or what his chief End or final Good is. He is uſually and very properly diſtinguiſhed into two conſtituent Parts, Body and Soul; as *Gen.* ii. *ver.* 7. *And the Lord God formed Man of the duſt of the ground, and breathed into his Noſtrils the Breath of life, and Man became a living Soul.* The *one* He has in common with the inferiour Creatures, and in the *other* He reſembles the Superiour Intelligences. And under this general diſtinction of *Matter* and *Spirit*, is comprehended the Whole of what we know of the Univerſe; each of them having Properties peculiar to themſelves, which cannot belong to the other; whence they appear to have entirely different *Subſtances* or *Eſſences*, though we have no diſtinct or clear Idea of *them*. Each of theſe hath place in the Compoſition of *Man*: They are very cloſely united together in him, and have a mutual dependance upon, and continually influence each other. The former of theſe, *viz.* *the Body*, or *Man* conſidered only as a Creature endued with *animal Life*, has been treated of in the former Diſcourſes; that it might appear, what *Imperfections* or *Evils* He is incident to, as a neceſſary Conſequence of the original Principles of ſuch Creatures, and the Laws they are ſubject to. Thus the *Matter* of which the humane *Body* is formed, not differing from the common Duſt of the Earth, is ſubject to the ſame Laws of Motion with That, and muſt produce the like Effects. The *Structure* of its Parts likewiſe, being the ſame as that of Plants, requiring perpetual Nouriſhment; the Principle of *Vegetation* is here neceſſary alſo, and this is attended with its peculiar Conſequences and Effects. And the *Frame* of the whole Body, being like that of all other animated Creatures, ſtands in need of that natural *Inſtinct* from whence proceed all its Paſſions and Affections, which have their *Irregularities*, and are capable of *Abuſes* likewiſe.

*Of the Mind and its Faculties and Powers.*

That which remains now to be conſidered, is the *Soul* or *Mind* of Man, what *Powers* and *Faculties* it is endued with, what *Laws* or *Rules* it is ſubject to; that we may ſee what *Imperfections* and *Evils* may ariſe from hence, which will take in the Whole of what I at firſt propoſed. The Mind, though it be but one ſimple uniform intelligent Subſtance, yet is it endowed with ſeveral *Powers* and *Faculties*, which are denominated from the different Objects, or diverſe Manners of the Exerciſe of them. For it is with the *Rational* Nature, juſt as with the *Animal* Nature; The Principle of *Life* is one and the ſame, though the Modes of Senſation or Feeling are different, according to the reſpective Organs of the Body through which it is conveyed, and the different

Impreſſions of external Objects upon them: And ſo alſo is the Principle of *Reaſon* one and the ſame, though differently diſtinguiſhed in the Application of it. The firſt and moſt general of theſe Powers of the Mind, is *Perception*: By which it takes Notice of thoſe Objects which are preſented to it. And in This the Mind is ſo far paſſive, that for the moſt part it cannot help ſuch Notice; Its Perception is only a bare reception of the Impreſſions made upon it by external Objects. But it has moreover a Power of *retaining* and, when it pleaſes, *recalling* thoſe Impreſſions or Ideas, and of comparing them with each other, and ſeeing whether they have any Relation or Dependance, or be diſagreeable and unconnected one with another; and then, by putting them together, of forming a Judgment of the Whole. And this is in a good meaſure *voluntary*; it depends upon a Man's Will, whether ſuch Objects ſhall be long retained, or often recalled; and ſo does likewiſe the exactneſs or intenſeneſs of his viewing them, and finding out their Properties and Relations: But after this, the Judgment that he forms of them, or the Truths which reſult from ſuch Compariſons, are neceſſary and ſuch as He cannot avoid ſeeing. The laſt Property of the Mind is the Power of *acting* or *conforming* it ſelf to that Judgment, which it has made in things relating to Mens Behaviour towards, and Converſation with others. And in this, properly, *Freedom* † or *Liberty* conſiſts; in the being able to act, or to forbear acting, after ſeeing what is fitteſt to be done. Theſe are the principal Faculties of the Mind of Man, and the manner of their Operation; And in *Theſe* is laid the Foundation of all Knowledge, both natural and moral. Concerning the Truth and Certainty of theſe Faculties, we can only appeal to every Man's own Experience, and bid him examine within himſelf, and ſee if he does not find theſe Principles in his Breaſt, and if he does not naturally proceed in this Method. But the Degrees of theſe are very different, in different Perſons of the ſame Order, and in different Orders of Beings. For we obſerve amongſt Men, that the intellectual Powers, Capacities and Faculties of ſome, are much larger and more acute than *thoſe* of others; and we have reaſon to think, that in Angels and other ſtill ſuperiour

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† Ἐκούσιον, οὗ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐν τῷ ποιοῦντι πᾶσα· Ariſt. Eth. Lib. III. cap. 2.

Creatures, they are more univerſally extenſive; there being no Bounds to be ſet to the Poſſibilities of the exerciſe of the infinite Creator's Power, with reſpect to the Exiſtence of ſuch Beings. On the other hand, in thoſe Creatures which are inferiour to Man, but are yet endued with animal Life; there are plain Marks of ſuch kind of Powers and Capacities as are in Men, though in a lower Degree, and in very different Proportions in thoſe Creatures themſelves. The Power of ſimple Perception is evident in them all; they being capable of receiving and taking Notice of the Impreſſions of external Objects, by Means of their ſeveral bodily Senſes, in the ſame manner as we do, and ſome of them with much greater quickneſs and ſagacity. The Power of Judgment, or of comparing things together, and of ſeeing Truth and Falſehood, they ſeem not to have at all; but only to determine themſelves by the Agreeableneſs or Diſagreeableneſs of thoſe Objects which are immediately preſent to them. But as to the *Self-motive* Power, 'tis evident they are poſſeſſed of that; for nothing can more plainly appear than this, in every Thing we ſee them do. But becauſe they have not the Power of abſtract Reaſoning, nor the ſame Underſtanding and Senſe of Moral Good and Evil, which is in Men; therefore we call it generally *Spontaneity*. Theſe are the principal Powers and Faculties which we obſerve in all intelligent Creatures, but particularly in Man.

*Of the natural Diſpoſitions of the Mind.*

There are, beſides theſe, ſeveral Diſpoſitions and Inclinations, which it is likewiſe neceſſary to conſider, in order to a thorough Knowledge of the Nature of Man. Not only *That Senſe* of *Moral* Good and Evil, which ariſes from *Underſtanding*, is apparent in Men; but they have alſo a *Natural Inclination* to Moral Good; they are *diſpoſed* by their Original Frame and Conſtitution, to act according to the eternal and unalterable Rules of it. Theſe Inclinations and Diſpoſitions of the Mind, are by the Heathen Moraliſts made the firſt Principles from whence every good and vertuous Action proceeds; And they diſtinguiſhed them into four Sorts, correſponding to the four Cardinal Vertues. The firſt of which, is That *Deſire after Truth* which appears from the Curioſity Men have, when they are at leiſure from worldly Affairs, to enquire into Things difficult and abſtruſe; and the Satisfaction they have in them, when found out. The Next is a *Love of Society*, which can no otherwiſe be maintained but by univerſal Juſtice and Fidelity towards every Man. The Third is, a *Senſe of Honour and Dignity*, which is ſeen in thoſe Heroick Actions, which Men are ready to perform on all Occaſions, whatever Hazards or Dangers they are expoſed to. The Laſt is, a Senſe likewiſe of *Order and Decency* in all our Words and Actions, which renders them not only agreeable but beautiful to the Underſtanding. Theſe are the principal Diſpoſitions of Mind, which the wiſe Author of Nature has more or leſs planted in every Man.

*Of the Paſſions or Affections ariſing from the Body.*

There are yet *Other Inclinations* which ariſe from the *Body*, and which are the Foundation of the ſeveral Paſſions in Men. Thoſe of them which are neceſſary to preſerve Life and Health, and which Men have in common with the inferiour Creatures, and are the Effects of mere ſenſitive Nature; ſuch as Hunger and Thirſt, Cold and Wearineſs, and the like; have been formerly examined into. But the ſame Principles have a different Effect upon an Intelligent and Rational Creature; and therefore with reſpect to ſuch, muſt be conſidered in another View. We need only to conſult the Motions of our own Breaſts, or to make a ſlight Reflection upon the Actions of Others, to be ſufficiently convinced of the Nature of humane Paſſions and Affections, of the great Strength and powerful Effects of them. The Inſtances of Love and Hatred, Hope and Fear, Anger and

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Complacency, and the like, are ſo common and obvious, that they ſtand in need of no Proof; 'Tis the Application or Miſapplicatior, the Uſe or Abuſe of them, that wants to be conſidered and explained. In inferiour Creatures, theſe Paſſions and Affections ſeem to influence them, only whilſt the Objects of them are preſent, and immediately ſtrike the Senſes: But in Men, who are capable of reflecting or retaining the Images of abſent Objects in their Minds, they may be very much heightned or diminiſhed according to their own Pleaſure.

*That the Inclinations and Paſſions in Men, abſtractly conſidered, are not Evil*

Theſe are the principal Faculties and Inclinations, Powers and Diſpoſitions, which we obſerve to be in Men. And, if we conſider them ſingly, what they are in their own Nature, and what the Uſe and End of them is; we may include not only the intellectual Perfections, but alſo theſe bodily Affections and Paſſions, under the general Expreſſion of *Moſes*; and pronounce concerning them, that *behold they are all very good*; or as the Wiſe-man ſays, *Eccleſ.* vii, 29, *Lo, this only have I found, that God made Man upright*. It muſt therefore be comparatively ſpeaking only, that *Theſe* are at any time affirmed to be *Evil*; And we are to underſtand by it no more than *leſs good*, or *leſs perfect*, when applied to others of a higher Degree or more exalted Nature: In the ſame manner as the common Ground, compared with the Garden of *Eden*, is in Scripture ſaid to be *curſed*, and to bring forth Thorns and Thiſtles, *Gen.* iii, 17; And yet there is no reaſon to think that Thorns and Thiſtles were to be excepted out of That Part of the Creation, chap. i, ver. 11, where *God ſaid, Let the Earth bring forth Graſs, and the Herb yielding Seed, and the Fruit-tree yielding Fruit after his Kind, whoſe Seed is in it ſelf upon the Earth.* So animal Creatures compared with Man, may in this Senſe be ſtiled *bad* or *evil*. And ſo may Man himſelf with regard to Angels, and Angels with reſpect to ſtill ſuperiour Intelligences. There is no End of ſuch Compariſons; And it is the ſupreme Being alone, concerning whom abſolutely and univerſally, *Goodneſs* can be affirmed; according to that of our Saviour, *Matt.* xix, 17, *There is none* good *but one, that is God*. In all created Beings there are eſſentially, in every reſpect, *Imperfections* and *Wants*; Their *Goodneſs* can only, in the nature of Things, be relative and extend to a cettain Degree ; and without ſome Alteration in their Circumſtances, or ſome extraordinary Addition to their Powers and Faculties, they cannot go beyond their natural Limits. Thus material Things are capable of nothing but mere paſſiveneſs, of continuing in That State whether of Reſt or Motion, into which they are once put : Theſe are the loweſt Part of the viſible Creation. Vegetative Things are endued with a Principle ſuperiour to this, whereby they are formed into different Shapes, extended to different Magnitudes, and have different Qualities, and are poſſeſſed of what we call *vegetative Life.* Animal Creatures are endued with a Principle ſtill higher, *viz. Inſtinct*, the Effects of which are very wonderful and ſurpriſing;

as appears in their great Tenderneſs and Care for their Young, in their Sagacity to find out and procure Food ; and above all, in the curious Contrivance of ſome of them (as Birds, and Ants, and Spiders, and Bees) in building themſelves Habitations, providing Food for Extremity, and the like, beyond the Art and Invention of the wiſeſt of Men. The next and higheſt Step is the Principle of *Intelligence*, which is peculiar to Man, by which He becomes a reaſonable Creature, capable of Religion and Vertue, and a proper Subject of Reward and Happineſs conſequent hereupon. Theſe are the ſeveral Gradations of Beings in this lower World ; the Species and Individuals of which, are very different from each other, and are denominated *Good* or *Evil* proportionably to their reſpective Ends and Uſes, Perfections and Excellencies.

*All the Evil ariſes from free Agents abuſing theſe Diſpoſitions and Affections.*

As therefore in theſe Inſtances of the *Material*, *Vegetative*, and *Animal* Parts of the World, abſtractly conſidered, there is no ſuch Thing as real *Evil*; but every Imperfection or Irregularity is ſuch as neceſſarily follows from the preſent State and Circumſtances of Things, and is the genuine Reſult of thoſe Laws which they were originally made ſubject to: So likewiſe, if we conſider the *intellectual* Powers and Capacities, Inclinations and Diſpoſitions, Paſſions and Affections of free Agents abſtractly; we ſhall find that *They* are ſo far from being *Evil* in themſelves, that they are on the contrary very *Good*, that is, appointed for very wiſe and good Ends, which naturally follow from a juſt Application of them to their proper Objects; and conſequently that every *Evil* in them, is either a natural *Imperfection* only, or elſe ariſes from the Miſapplication or Abuſe of them by voluntary Agents under ſome particular Circumſtances; Their *Liableneſs* to which Abuſes, and even the actual Commiſſion of them, was not poſſible to have been prevented, but upon Suppoſition of deſtroying or over-ruling their natural Powers and Faculties. Thus the Power of *Underſtanding*, is a natural Excellency and Perfection, whereby thoſe Creatures who are endued with it, are capable of diſcerning the Truth of *Things*, and of ſeeing the Relations that *Perſons* ſtand in to each other; 'Tis therefore very agreeable to the Notions we have of God, to think that He ſhould create ſome Beings with ſuch a Power as this. And, it being in Him intirely voluntary to beſtow his Gifts as he pleaſes; it muſt be wholly reſolved into his Will, *what Degrees* of Underſtanding He will communicate to any Beings, and in what Circumſtances and upon what Conditions. So likewiſe the Self-motive Power, or That Principle by which free Agents are capable of acting or forbearing to act, is a natural Excellency; becauſe hereby an intelligent Being is capable of conforming his Actions to thoſe Truths and Relations, which by his intellectual Nature only He could ſee the Agreeableneſs of; And this renders him a Subject of Morality and Religion. And here alſo there may, in this Senſe, be ſaid to be different Degrees of Liberty; that the Inſtances and Opportunities of exerciſing this Power, may be many more and much greater in ſome Creatures than in others: And *Theſe* alſo muſt be referred to the Creator's Will, no One having any Right to Any of them. Alſo the ſame may be affirmed concerning thoſe Inclinations and Paſſions, which ariſe either from the Mind or from the Body; They are of great Uſe, and deſigned for very good Purpoſes. Thus the Mind is naturally diſpoſed to Virtue, the Excellency of which is diſtinguiſhed by the Underſtanding: And Men are excited by their bodily Affections, to do a great many Things, which they would not otherwiſe have thought of, had they not been ſignifyed to them in this Manner; and which are very neceſſary to their Preſervation and Well-being. The Degrees of *theſe* alſo are very different, in Creatures of the ſame, as well as in thoſe of different Species; and depend intirely on the Will of the Supreme Being, who has proportioned them to the reſpective Circumſtances of the ſeveral Creatures. In the irrational Part of the Creation, theſe Paſſions and Affections are the ſole Spring and Meaſure of all their Actions: They put them upon ſeeking for Food and Reſt, to nouriſh and refreſh their Bodies; And to theſe is owing the Propagation of their Species, and the Care for their Young, and the like. In Man, the Objects of theſe Paſſions are the ſame; but they are under the Direction of Reaſon, and therefore ought to be regulated by that. They are to Him in the Nature of Inſtruments, in the Uſe or Abuſe of which conſiſts the good or evil of them. And in Beings ſtill ſuperiour to Man, who have Bodies that do not ſtand in Need of ſuch

Maintenance, Preſervation and Continuance, as ours do; there may be no Occaſion for ſuch Paſſions at all: But their Love of Vertue may be ſufficient to induce them to conform to the Rules of it in all their Actions. And this is the Repreſentation given in Scripture, of Angels and juſt Men made perfect, *Rev.* xxi. 4. *And God ſhall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there ſhall be no more Death, neither ſorrow, nor crying; neither ſhall there be any more* Pain, πόνος *Labour.* And *Mark* xii. 25. *And when they ſhall riſe from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in Marriage, but are as the Angels which are in heaven.* It is evident therefore, that in the Nature of Things, and abſtractly conſidered, *Theſe* are all perfectly indifferent, both as to their Exiſtence at all, and as to the Degree and

Manner of it. The Variety is infinite, and they are all equally the Object of infinite Power. And 'tis the ſame here as in the material World; it belongs to Wiſdom and Goodneſs to determine *which*, out of all the Poſſibilities, ſhall actually exiſt, and *which* upon the whole are the moſt proper and convenient Circumſtances to place them in. We can come to the Knowledge of them, only by Experience and Obſervation. Whence by a particular Examination of the ſeveral Sorts of Powers and Faculties, and of the Objects correſponding to them, we are able to form a Judgment of the general Nature of the Being to which they belong: We can ſee wherein the true Perfection of ſuch a Being conſiſts, and what Kind of Life it ought to lead in order to attain ſuch Perfection. From the

Notion we have of the Perfections and Attributes of God, there is no Reaſon to think that He ſhould confine himſelf to the Creation of one Sort of intellectual Beings only, any more than that He ſhould make but one Planet or one fixed Star; It is much more agreeable to infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs, to make different and various Degrees of Creatures, every one of which in their proper Place contributes to the Beauty and Order of the Whole. And ſo in Fact it appears to be. In Order therefore to judge of the Perfection or Imperfection of any Being, and the *Good* or *Evil* it is incident to; it is neceſſary to conſider the conſtituent Parts of it ſingly, what its ſeveral Powers and Qualities are, and then to put them together, and ſee their mutual Influence, and what is the Reſult of the whole Compoſition. In the preſent Enquiry, *Mankind only* is our Subject; how it comes to paſs that there is ſo much Sin and Iniquity practiſed amongſt Men. We have already examined the ſeveral Parts, of which Man is compoſed, ſeparately; and have ſeen the Nature and Uſe of them: And in *Theſe* there appears no other *Evil*, than that of *Imperfection* only, which Men have in common with the higheſt created Beings whatſoever. For there is no Degree of limited Underſtanding, but there may be a ſtill greater ſuppoſed; and no finite Goodneſs ſo exact, but that a greater Exactneſs will yet be poſſible. Wherefore there can be no Objection made againſt any One Order of created Intelligences, but the ſame will hold equally againſt any other Order that can be conceived. Thus for Inſtance, if the

*Weakneſs* of Mens Underſtanding, by which Means they are liable to be miſtaken in a Multitude of Things; the Shallowneſs of their Capacities, whereby they can comprehend but a few Truths; and the Unſteadineſs of their Wills, which are often biaſſed by Paſſion inſtead of being governed by Reaſon; and many other ſuch like natural Defects and Imperfections: if *theſe*, I ſay, are any Objection againſt the preſent Frame and Conſtitution of Man, they hold in Proportion againſt any other or againſt all created Beings whatſoever. And according to this Rule, there ought to have been no Diverſity of intelligent Beings, but the ſupreme Being was obliged to exert his infinite Perfections to an infinite Degree: For where-ever we ſtop ſhort of Infinity, the Underſtanding, how enlarged ſoever, will be capable of being impoſed upon: And if there be any Diſpoſitions or Affections in ſuch a Being, they will be liable to be drawn off by ſome Temptations; and a ſmall Defect in ſo exalted a Nature is proportionably as criminal as a greater One in a Being of a meaner Sort. But Experience ſufficiently teſtifies the contrary; and ſhows us that the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God is much more diſplayed in making great Variety of intelligent Beings; from the different Circumſtances and Relations of which, ariſe different Duties, in the Performance whereof they experience particular Satisfaction, and are moreover capable of proportionable Rewards of Happineſs. Upon this Foundation, all that is reaſonable to expect, is, that in God Almighty's Dealings with ſuch Creatures, He ſhould conform himſelf to their reſpective Capacities and Abilities, ſo as that upon the Whole there ſhould be the moſt Good, and the greateſt Happineſs; and that His Government and the Nature of Things ſhould be ſo perfectly conſiſtent, as that finally the free Rewards which He confers on his Creatures, ſhould be coincident with *Vertue*, and with That *natural Happineſs* which neceſſarily reſults from the practice of it. Thus much we are aſſured of in general, from what is demonſtrable concerning the Perfections and Attributes of God: But all the Particulars, it is impoſſible for us to know. They are as much beyond our Underſtandings, as the original Particles of Matter, or the moſt diſtant fixed Stars, are beyond the reach of our Eyes. But as all Truth, *moral* as well as *natural*, is analogous; and God has not left himſelf without Witneſs in the *moral*, any more than in the *natural* World; we have a very good Foundation, from what we do know and experience, to judge of other Things, the Means of knowing which we are not at preſent poſſeſs'd of. It is the preſent Scene of Life only, that is open to us; We are in great meaſure ignorant both of what is paſt, and of what is to come; It is impoſſible therefore to ſee the Connexion and Dependance they have upon each other. There is alſo juſt Reaſon to think that there are Intelligences ſuperiour to Man, whom he bears ſome Similitude to, and has ſome Relation to. Of theſe we can know little more, than what the Scripture ſays concerning the Dignity of Angels and other ſuperiour

Powers; and concerning their Office, *That they are miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter to them who ſhall be Heirs of Salvation*, Heb. i. 14. But we know enough of our own preſent State and Circumſtances, to ſee manifeſt Inſtances of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God's Government of Mankind, ſufficient to juſtify him in this reſpect alſo, and to render him clear when He is judged; ſo that He may now appeal to *themſelves*, as He did of old by his Prophet to the Inhabitants of *Jeruſalem* and the Men of *Judah*, to *judge betwixt Him and his Vineyard, what he could have done more for it, that he has not done in it; yet when he looked it ſhould bring forth Grapes, it brought forth wild Grapes*, Iſai. vi, 3. That is; There are *moral* as well as *natural* Means of Improvement, which are proportion'd to the Powers and Capacities of the Subject. If theſe be afforded them in their due Proportion, there is all done for them that in the nature of Things could be done; and to ſuppoſe more, is to ſuppoſe ſomething incompatible with the Subject, and which, if applied, would produce the contrary Effect to what was intended. Thus we ſee that Powers and Faculties, Diſpoſitions and Affections, whether *natural* or *moral*, cannot properly in themſelves be ſtiled *Evil*; either as to the *Nature*, or as to the *Degree* of them. All the *Evil* that there can be in *This reſpect*, conſiſts either in the *Want* of ſome Faculties or Perfections which other Beings, ſuperiour to Man, are endued with; or elſe in having the ſame Powers and Perfections in a *lower Degree.* Neither of which is any real *Evil,* but is the unavoidable Conſequence of the Nature of ſuch Beings. For it is evident, that bare Exiſtence is better than Non-exiſtence; that animal Life is ſuperiour to dead unactive Matter; that Intelligence and Liberty, and other rational Powers, are yet greater Perfections than Inſtinct and Paſſion and the like. 'Tis alſo evident that every one of *Theſe* is voluntary, and the free Gift of God, which He may confer in what Manner, and to what Degree He himſelf pleaſes; no one having any Right to demand them. From whence it follows, that as the ſupreme Being was not obliged to create any ſort of Beings at all, but it is for his Good-pleaſure only that they are and were created; ſo likewiſe was he under no Obligation to confer ſuch particular Powers and Faculties, or to confer them in ſuch a certain Degree; But *Theſe* alſo are equally owing to his Good-pleaſure. And there is no more Reaſon to complain of that Share which any one Sort of Being poſſeſſes, becauſe God has conferred more on others; than there is for the irrational Part of the Creation to complain that they were not made Men, or for Men to complain that they were not made Angels, or for any other Creature whatſoever to complain of the Want of ſuch Perfections and Faculties, as never did belong to their Nature. The Powers therefore and Diſpoſitions, the Paſſions and Affections, abſtractly conſidered, have no other *Evil* in them, but what is the neceſſary Conſequence of Mens being finite and limited. 'Tis all, comparatively ſpeaking only; as they may be compared with Beings of a ſuperiour Nature: With regard to whom they may be very *imperfect*, and yet in their proper Places as *good* as they were intended to be, and fully anſwer the Deſign of their Creation. For it is manifeſt that every one of them has its proper Uſe; And in the right Application or Exerciſe of it, ſome very good End is ſerved. 'Tis in the Miſapplication or Abuſe of *Theſe*, that *Evil*, ſtrictly and properly ſpeaking, conſiſts. And this ſuppoſes that the Being poſſeſt of theſe Powers and Faculties, is a voluntary Agent; that He not only underſtands what is fit and right, but has moreover a Power of acting accordingly; that He is not only endued with Paſſions and Affections, but alſo has a Power of regulating and governing them according to Reaſon. In any *other* Senſe of the

Word *Evil,* the Caſe is the ſame here, as in *all other* natural Things; They muſt all, from their *Imperfections,* be liable to many Diſorders and Irregularities.

*The Conſideration of Man as a compound Creature.*

In order therefore to account for the Original of *Moral Evil,* we muſt take in the whole Compoſition of Man. We muſt examine the ſeveral Laws, which the conſtituent Parts of him are ſubject to; and ſee their mutual Influence and Effect. For from theſe different Principles it is, that the firſt Motions of all Sin and Iniquity ariſe; according to that of St *Paul,* Rom. vii. 23. *But I ſee another Law in my Members warring againſt the Law of my Mind, and bringing me into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which is in my Members.* The *manner* of which, is fully explained by St *James, ch.* i, *v.* 14; *But every Man is tempted,*

*tempted, when He is drawn away of his own Luſt and enticed*; (drawn out of the Way, and enſnared by his Deſires and Appetites:) *Then when Luſt* (Deſire or Paſſion) *hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin, and Sin when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth Death.* The moral World has its peculiar Laws and Rules to which it ought to be ſubject, as well as the natural World; only with this Difference, that the one is *neceſſary*, the other *voluntary*; the one is acted upon, the other acts of it ſelf: But the Reaſon and Foundation of ſuch Actions are certain and uniform.

*The Obligation that ariſes from hence to the Practiſe of Morality.*

What theſe Rules and Laws are, and what is the Obligation in intelligent and voluntary Agents to conform to them, 'tis neceſſary particularly to inquire into; that we may ſee wherein *Vertue* and *Vice* conſiſts, and whence it is that the Practice of the *latter* ſo much abounds in the World. *Truth* and *Right* are the proper Objects of the Thoughts and Deſires of ſuch a Being, as we have deſcribed Man to be. The One is the Reſult of the Nature and Reaſon of *Things*; and the other is the Reſult of the different Relations and Circumſtances of *Perſons*, compared with each other. Wherefore as Man is *intelligent*, He is concerned to find out *Truth*, eſpecially ſuch Truths as are of Importance for Him to know; and as He is a *voluntary* Agent, it is his Buſineſs to regulate his Practice according to *Right*, or as the Condition He is in with Reſpect to Others requires. Upon this Foundation the antient Moraliſts built all their Precepts of Vertue, and from hence they drew the Obligations to live according to thoſe Rules. * They diſtinguiſhed Man (according to the forementioned Diviſion of St *Paul*) into two principal Parts, *Soul* and *Body*, each of which has its peculiar Properties and Affections; in a right diſtinguiſhing of which, and a due imploying them upon their proper Objects, and in a juſt Subordination of them to each other, they made the whole of Morality to conſiſt. They ſuppoſed the utmoſt Perfection that Man was capable of arriving at, was † *to live according to Nature.* By which they meant, that as there are different Kinds of Plants which require different Sorts of

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* Διὸ ϗ τὸν βέλτιϛα διακείμενον ϗ κατὰ σῶμα ϗ κατὰ ψυχὴν ἄνθρωπον θεωρητέον, &c. *Ariſtot. Polit. Lib.* I. *Ch.* 5.

Atqui perſpicuum eſt, hominem é Corpore Animoque conſtare; cum primæ ſint animi partes, ſecundæ corporis. *Cic. de finibus, Lib.* V. § 12.

† Homini id eſſe in bonis ultimum, ſecundum naturam vivere; quod ita interpretemur, vivere ex hominis natura undique perfecta, & nihil requirente. *Cic. ibid.* § 9.

Ground, and different Management in Order to a due Nouriſhment, ſo as to arrive at the greateſt Maturity; and as there are different Kinds of Animals, which, according to their different Make and Conſtitution, live different Sorts of Lives in Order to partake of the greateſt *Good* they are capable of: ſo likewiſe is there ſomething different from all theſe in Man, whereby He is diſtinguiſhed from all other Creatures, which is his peculiar Nature; and in living according to the Dictates of which, he is in the moſt eaſy State, and enjoys the utmoſt Happineſs that ſuch a Nature is capable of. The *bodily* Nature, which Man has in common with other Animals, as it is endued with the like Affections and Diſpoſitions with them, ſo are its Enjoyments the ſame: 'Tis the *intellectual* Nature that renders Him ſuperiour to them in ; in the Exerciſe and Improvement of which, he advances himſelf to the higheſt Perfection.

* The Powers of the *Mind* or intellectual Nature, are diſtinguiſhed into two Sorts: Such as are originally planted in it, and are involuntary, *viz.* *Reaſon*, *Docility*, *Memory* and the like; or ſuch as are acquired and depend upon the Will, *viz.* *Prudence*, *Temperance*, *Fortitude*, *Juſtice* and ſuch like. *Both* theſe are ſtyled *Vertues* (Vertue being a general Name for any Excellency or Perfection whatſoever, and is often applyed to *inferiour* Creatures, and many Times even to *inanimate* Things with Regard to their peculiar Uſefulneſs or Benefit,)

* Animi autem, & ejus animi partis quæ princeps eſt, quæque *Mens* nominatur, plures ſunt virtutes, ſed duo prima genera: unum earum, quæ ingenerantur ſuapte natura, appellanturque non voluntariæ: alterum earum quæ in voluntate poſitæ, magis proprio nomine appellari ſolent, *&c.* *Cic. ibid.* § 13.

fit;) but the *latter* are more properly ſo called, and are derived from that peculiar Excellence † of *Fortitude* or *Magnanimity*, which (the Antients thought) in *Man* exceeded all other Creatures. Every one of *Theſe* has its proper *Object*; in rightly diſtinguiſhing of which and duly applying it, conſiſts all *moral Vertue.* Thus the Faculty of *Reaſon* was as evidently given Men, that they might diſtinguiſh betwixt *Truth and Falſhood*, *Right and Wrong*; as the Power of Seeing, was given them to diſtinguiſh external Objects. There is therefore the ſame Obligation for a Man to make Uſe of this rational Power, as there is for him to make Uſe of his Eyes. And the ſame may be applied to all the other Faculties of the Mind, as well as to the Senſes of the Body.

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† Thus the Greeks derived 'Αρετη from 'Αρης, and the Latins *Virtus* from *Vir.* Atqui vide nè, cum omnes rectæ animi Affectiones Virtutes appellantur, non ſit hoc proprium nomen omnium; ſed ab ea quæ una cæteris excellebat, omnes nominatæ ſint. Appellata eſt enim ex viro virtus; viri autem propria maximé eſt fortitudo. *Cic. ibid. lib. II.* §. 18.

*The Method in which the Heathen Moraliſts deduced the Obligation to the particular Duties of Morality.*

And hence appears the particular Obligation, every Man is *naturally* under, to practice all the Duties of Morality. And after This Manner the forementioned Heathen Moraliſts deduced them. * By the Faculty of Reaſon every Man is more or leſs capable of perceiving not only the Things that are preſent and immediately before him, but alſo of ſearching backward into their firſt Cauſe and Original, and of looking forward to their Conſequences and Effects; by comparing of which together,

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* Homo autem quod Rationis eſt particeps, per quam conſequentia cernit, cauſas rerum videt, earumque progreſſus & quaſi anteceſſiones non ignorat, ſimilitudines comparat, & rebus præſentibus adjungit atque annectit futuras: facilè totius vitæ curſum videt &c. *Cic. Offic. Lib.* 1. § 4.

He ſees the Foundation He ought to act upon; And by thus comprehending in one View the whole Courſe of his Life, he can make a general Proviſion for his Subſiſtence. * The ſame Power of Reaſon inclines Men to aſſociate with each other, to entertain themſelves with mutual Converſation, and to contract Friendſhip; And herein they are united by the Bonds of Love and Affection proportionable to their ſeveral Relations. † It is by This Faculty likewiſe, that they are able to find out and reliſh Truth; every Man having a natural Deſire of knowing and underſtanding thoſe Things which he ſees and hears, and being unwilling to be deceived or impoſed

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* Eademque Natura vi Rationis hominem conciliat homini, & ad Orationis & ad vitæ Societatem, &c. *Cic. Ibid.*

† Imprimiſque hominis eſt propria Veri inquiſitio. *Ibid.*

impoſed upon. * But the Force of Reaſon is in nothing more conſpicuous, than in This particular; that every Man is by this Means made capable of judging of the Tenour and Regularity of his Life and Actions, of diſcerning what is fit and decent to be done, and what is irregular and unworthy of him. Theſe Principles do themſelves intimate what the proper Uſe of them is, and how they are to be imployed: There is a *natural Correſpondence* betwixt *Them* and their reſpective *Objects*, which is founded in the Reaſon of Things, and which is an eternal and invariable Rule of Action.

*Wherein the* Ho-neſtum *and* De-corum *of the Antients conſiſt.*

Thus, that there is an eſſential Difference in the Nature and Properties of Things, and in the State and Condition of Perſons, is evi-

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* Nec vero illa parva Vis naturæ eſt rationiſque, quod unum hoc animal (ſcil. homo) quid ſit ordo, quid ſit quod deceat, in factis dictiſque qui modus, &c. *Ibid.*

dent to every one; Whence it follows that in the Application of Things to each other, or in the Actions to be performed towards Perſons, there muſt be an Agreeableneſs or Diſagreeableneſs according as they are proportioned or diſproportioned to the Conſtitution and Circumſtances of them; And from hence ariſes what the Antients called *Decorum* with Reſpect to natural Actions, and *Honeſtum* with Regard to moral Actions. The Mind is not only able to take Notice of Actions, but alſo to judge whether ſuch Actions be proper or improper, whether they are becoming the Perſon who performs them, and ſuch as the Relation he ſtands in to Others requires; upon which it either approves or condemns them. For there is a certain Order and Harmony of acting, which recommends it ſelf to the *Under-*

*ſtanding*, and is as agreeable to it as the Symetry and Proportion of natural Objects is to the Senſes of the *Body*: In performing of which Actions, it acquieſces and is perfectly ſatisfyed, is able to juſtify it ſelf, as to the Matter, Time and Manner, and to render a good Account of them. This Agreeableneſs of action to the Judgment of right Reaſon, cannot be better illuſtrated than by the Compariſon of *Plato*, as repreſented by *Tully*: * *In thoſe things* (ſays he,) *which are the Objects of Sight, no other Creature is ſo ſenſible of the Beauty and Comlineſs and Agreeableneſs of the ſeveral Parts to each other, as Man; Which Proportion, Nature and Reaſon*

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* Itaque eorum ipſorum, quæ aſpectu ſentiuntur, nullum aliud animal pulcritudinem, venuſtatem, convenientiam partium ſentit: Quam ſimilitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis ad animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulcritudinem, conſtantiam, ordinem in conſiliis, factisque conſervandum putat.

*transfers from the Eye to the Mind; and judgeth that Beauty, Conſiſtency and Order, in our Deſigns and Actions, are ſtill much more to be obſerved and maintained. And could we behold These with our bodily Eyes, as we do with the Eyes of the Mind; they would raiſe in us the greateſt poſſible Love for Vertue.* On this Account it is, that ſuch Actions are every where recommended as *honourable* and *praiſe-worthy*; inſomuch that Praiſe and Honour have been but other Names for Vertue, becauſe vertuous Actions carry in their Nature the Things moſt properly deſigned by thoſe Words. Thus the conſiderate Part of the Heathen World found out the Obligation to practiſe moral Vertue, by a diligent Application and Enquiry

into

——quæ ſi oculis cerneretur (*viz.* forma Honeſti,) mirabiles amores (ut ait *Plato*) excitaret ſapientiæ. *Cic. Ibid.*

into the Nature and Reaſon of Things, in the ſame Manner as they found out other Arts and Sciences. As the Proportions of Colours and Sounds are exactly calculated to the Eye and Ear; and there muſt be ſome Defect in thoſe Organs, if they cannot diſtinguiſh or reliſh them: So is every Duty of Morality as exactly calculated to the Inclinations and Faculties of the Mind; and there muſt be ſome Diſorder in theſe, if they do not take Notice of and be not well affected towards them.* For there is ſomething very beautiful and pleaſing in every vertuous Action, which tho' it may be diſtinguiſhed from it in the Mind, yet can never be really ſeparated from it: In the ſame Manner as in a humane Body, the Parts of which are all entire and well proportioned, the Beauty and Comelineſs of it cannot be ſeparated from that Health to which they are owing.

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* Eſt enim quiddam idque intelligitur in omni virtute quod deceat *&c. Cic. ibid.* § 27.

*The ſame mentioned in Scripture.*

To this it is (I ſuppoſe) that St. *Paul* refers, when He ſays, Rom. II. ver. 14. *that the Gentiles which have not the Law* (revealed,) *do by Nature the Things contained in the Law: Theſe having not the Law, are a Law unto themſelves; who ſhew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conſcience bearing Witneſs, and their Thoughts amongſt each other either accuſing or elſe excuſing them.* For here the Apoſtle ſuppoſes, that the moral Law is founded in the Nature and Reaſon of Things; that every Man is endued with ſuch Powers and Faculties of Mind, as render him capable of ſeeing and taking Notice of this

Law; and alſo with ſuch a Senſe and Judgment of the Reaſonableneſs and Fitneſs of conforming his Actions to it, that He cannot but in his own Mind acquit himſelf when he does ſo, and condemn himſelf when he does otherwiſe. And in the iv*th Ch.* to the *Phil. ver.* 8, the ſame Apoſtle recommends the Practiſe of Vertue upon the forementioned Principles of Comelineſs and Reputation; *Finally,* **Brethren,** *whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any Vertue, if there be any Praiſe, think on theſe things.* Theſe Principles if duly attended to, were ſufficient to inſtruct Men in the Whole of their Duty towards themſelves, and towards

wards each other: And they would alſo have taught them their Duty towards God their Creator and Governour, if they had diligently purſued them; For according as the ſame Apoſtle expreſſes it, *Rom.* I. *v.* 20. *the inviſible things of God, from the Creation of the World, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead*; and Acts xiv. *v.* 17, *God left not himſelf without witneſs, in that he did good, and gave us rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seaſons, filling our Hearts with Joy and Gladneſs.* Theſe are ſtrict Demonſtrations, both of the Exiſtence of God, and of his Government of the World; For there can be no Effects without a Cauſe, no Order or Harmony without Intelligence, and no Benefits or Kindneſſes done without a

Good and Beneficent Doer. Wherefore though God Almighty be in his own Nature inviſible, yet is He known to us by his Works, and by his Providence; the Conſideration of each of which, ſhows us the Relation we ſtand in to Him, and the Duty conſequent thereupon. The ſame Fitneſs and Decency that appears in Mens regular Behaviour towards each other, appears alſo in their Behaviour towards God; And this likewiſe is founded in the Nature and Reaſon of Things, and is what the Circumſtances and Condition they are in, do abſolutely require. Thus we ſee wherein Moral Vertue or Good conſiſts, and what the Obligation to it is, from its own native Beauty and Excellency.

For from what has been ſaid it appears there are originally planted in all Men, in a greater or leſs

Degree, certain Faculties and Diſpoſitions of Mind; and that there is an eſſential Difference in Things and Perſons when compared together; which Difference ought to be obſerved and maintained by intelligent and voluntary Agents endued with thoſe Faculties and Diſpoſitions, as far as is in their Power; by which Means the Beauty and Harmony of the moral World is preſerved. And if this be once allowed, it is no more poſſible for Men to avoid ſeeing the natural Obligation they are under to practiſe Vertue upon Account of the native Beauty and Excellency of it, whenever they diligently attend to it; than it is poſſible for a judicious Ear not to diſtinguiſh, in Muſick, betwixt Harmony and Diſcord; or for a skilfull Muſician not to ſee, that there is a certain Tenour and Method of Sounds neceſſary to compoſe a Tune. Thus far, the mere Dictates of Nature teach us the common Laws eſtabliſhed in the moral World, in the ſame Manner as we are taught any other Science whatſoever. And the ſame Principles, had they been rightly purſued, would have carried Men ſtill further, *viz.* to the Acknowledgment of their Dependence upon God, not only for their original Powers and Faculties, but alſo for the continual Preſervation of them. For if they had reaſoned here, as they did in other Caſes, from the *Effect* to the *Cauſe*; they muſt have ſeen, that the Perfections and Excellencies of the Mind of Man, ſuch as Thought, Underſtanding, Liberty and the like, could not proceed from any Thing inferior to Themſelves, ſuch as are Matter and Motion, which have not thoſe

Properties: but muſt be derived from a Being which is it ſelf endued with thoſe Perfections in a much higher Degree, and who is both willing and able to communicate ſome Share of them to other Beings. And becauſe a Being who is himſelf endued with Knowledge and Power and Liberty in the higheſt Degree poſſible, could not communicate any Share of theſe Perfections to finite Creatures but with ſome Deſign, which Deſign is evident from the Nature of thoſe Perfections; nothing can be more manifeſt, than that *Knowledge* was given Men to this End, that they might ſearch after and find out their Creatour; and *Liberty*, that they might voluntarily conform themſelves to that Duty which they ſee ariſes from the Relation which they ſtand in to Him; and the other Faculties and *Powers* in like Manner, that they might be applied to their proper Uſes and ſerve their reſpective Ends. And the ſame Argument holds with Regard to the *Preſervation* and *Continuance* of theſe mental Powers. The ſame Experience, which convinces us that we cannot make *one Hair of our Heads white or black, nor add one Cubit to our Stature,* tells us alſo that we cannot alter the *Faculties of our Minds*; but that we depend every Moment of our Lives upon the divine Providence for his Care and Inſpection over us; and that *theſe* as plainly ſhow God's Power and Government, as the regular Motions of the Sun, Moon, and Stars do.

Matt. v. 36.
Matt. vi. 27.

But here was the great Defect of the Heathen Moraliſts. They conſidered only what the Powers and Diſpoſitions of the Mind were *in*

*Wherein the Morality of of the Heathen was deficient.*

*themſelves,* and what the proper Exerciſe and Office of them were: But they did not extend their Thoughts to the Original *Author* and continual *Preſerver* of them, to whoſe Goodneſs and Bounty they were ſo much indebted; but they comprehended their Notions hereof, under the general looſe Term, *Nature*: By which they meant no more than the preſent Conſtitution of Things, the Laws they are ſubject to, and the Effects produced by them; *whatever* the *Original* of them was; and without any Regard to *Him*, under whoſe Direction they are. And therefore the utmoſt extent of *Their* Morality reached no further than to what they called the four Cardinal Vertues. The Worſhip of falſe Gods, of the Sun and Moon and the Hoſt of Heaven, and of dead Kings and Heroes,

roes, ſo filled their Minds with Superſtition, that the Worſhip of the One only true God was entirely baniſh'd from amongſt them; and conſequently *moral Vertue*, (which, unleſs it be built upon this Principle that God is the Maker and Governour of the World, is nothing but a mere empty Name,) was only a ſpeculative Notion to entertain the Minds of the Curious, but was of little or no Force to regulate the Practiſe of the generality of Mankind. For though it be True, that the Foundation of moral Vertue is laid in the Nature and Reaſon of Perſons and Things, is the neceſſary Reſult of the different Relations and Proportions which they bear to each other when compared together, and conſequently is eternal and immutable; yet the Exiſtence both of the *Perſons* and the

*Things* themſelves is arbitrary, and depends entirely upon the Will of the Creator. The true Principle of religious Vertue therefore, is a conforming to the Circumſtances and Relations of Perſons and Things upon This View, that *God* is the original Author of them; that, what we call the Laws of Nature, are indeed the Rules preſcribed by Providence, under whoſe immediate Care and Inſpection all Things are; that every one of theſe is appointed for wiſe and good Ends; and that therefore it is the Duty of intelligent and voluntary Agents, to comply as much as is in their power, with what they thus find to be the Will of God; and to promote as far as they are able, what they ſee to be his Deſign, in Obedience to his Will, in Expectation of becoming thereby acceptable to Him, and capable of Reward from Him.

*Hence appears the Neceſſity of a Revelation.*

Hence appears the Neceſſity and End of a *Revelation*; to ſignify, in a plain and familiar Manner, *That Right* and *Authority* which *God* has over Mankind, and the Obligation they are under to pay Obedience to his Laws upon this Account. Though all the Duties of Morality are founded in the Nature and Reaſon of Things, and are eternal and immutable, (which cannot but recommend them to the Judgement of intelligent Beings, and procure their Approbation;) yet this hinders not, but the ſame Duties may *alſo* be conſiſtently recommended upon *other* very different Principles; and may be, for this Reaſon, more properly ſtiled *Duties*, becauſe of the perſonal Obligation to perform them, ariſing from the *Authority* of a ſuperiour Being who has a Right to command them. Thus, for Inſtance, He who proceeds by the ſame Rules in Morality that He does in natural Philoſophy, *viz.* examines what the *Ends* propoſed by the ſeveral Powers and Capacities of intelligent Agents muſt be, and thence collects what Sort of a Being it is, from whom theſe are derived, and what Authority and Power He has over ſuch Creatures; ſuch a Perſon cannot but ſee the Relation he ſtands in to Him, and the Obligation he is under to perform every moral Duty upon this Account; *viz.* That He who has conferred ſuch Benefits on Men, will expect that they ſhould gratefully acknowledge them and make ſuitable Returns: And ſeeing He has been ſo beneficent, as to beſtow theſe Gifts upon them without any Merit or Deſert of *Theirs*; if they make a right Uſe of them, He will reward them according to their reſpective Improvements. Theſe are the *Principles,* upon which all *Revelation* is founded: And after this Manner is the Obligation to the Practiſe of every Duty of Religion plainly deduced in the Writings of the Old and New Teſtament, but eſpecially in the latter.

*The manner in which the Duties of Morality are recommended by Revelation.*

It is every where ſuppoſed in theſe Writings, that Perſons capable of becoming Chriſtians, or of worſhipping God in the *Way* there recommended, are ſuch as are already convinced that there is a God, a Being infinitely powerful, Wiſe and Good; and that this Being is not only the Maker, but alſo the Governour and Judge of the World: This I ſay is taken for granted, as a thing ſo plain and obvious to any One that has never ſo little made Uſe of the natural Powers and Faculties of his Mind, that it could not be made more ſelf-evident; nothing but mere Stupidity or Obſtinacy is able to hinder Men from ſeeing it; like ſhutting their Eyes againſt the Sun, and then declaring that it is dark. In this View, the ſame Things which in their own Nature are fit and decent to be done, become alſo obligatory to Men upon the account of this Relation which they ſtand in to God, *viz.* as an Obligation of Gratitude, and in Expectation of Reward. Sobriety, Righteouſneſs and Godlineſs, correſpondent to the Relation we ſtand in to our ſelves, our Neighbours, and God Almighty; comprehend the Whole of theſe Things. And whatever is juſt and right in it ſelf; that is, whatever is reaſonable to be done, under ſuch Circumſtances; is the

Will and Command of That Being who made and governs every Creature; and 'tis therefore obligatory to all Men in their reſpective Stations, upon the *Authority* of *God*. And this is what is in Scripture meant by *Faith* in general, *viz.* ſuch a firm Perſuaſion of the Exiſtence of God, and ſuch an entire dependence upon his Government, as may influence Mens Actions, to do what they find to be agreeable to his Will. This ſingle Conſideration fully explains to us the meaning of all thoſe different Expreſſions, uſed by our Saviour and his Apoſtles, wherein the ſame Duties of Morality, under different Denominations, and with different Views, are recommended. The Reaſon why theſe Duties are ſo ſeldom in Scripture mentioned by the Name of *Vertues*, ſeems to be, becauſe the Heathen Moraliſts meant no more by that Word, than to ſignifie natural Perfections, without having any regard to the Author and Original from whence they proceeded: But the Deſign of the Scripture being to refer every Thing to God as the firſt Cauſe, therefore the Expreſſions There uſed are ſuch as were moſt proper for this Purpoſe. Thus St *Paul* aſcribes the very Capacities, Diſpoſitions and Actions of the Mind, to the Good-pleaſure of God, *Phil.* ii. 13. *For it is God that worketh in you to* will *and to* do, *of his good-pleaſure.* And our Saviour by many Similitudes compares the ſame Powers and Faculties, to Inſtruments and Talents put into our Hands by God Almighty as our King and Judge, who will finally call us to an Account for our Improvement or Abuſe of them. And the forementionʼd great and ſubſtantial Duties of Morality, are by St. *James* called *Gifts*, with Reſpect to God as the Author and Donour, from whom every Benefit and Kindneſs proceeds. *Ch.* i. 17, *every good Gift, and every perfect Gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights.* By St *Paul* the ſame Duties are aſcribed to the *Grace* of God; being the Effects of that ſingular Favour and Good-will which He has ſhewn to Mankind in the extraordinary Help and Aſſiſtance of the Goſpel; whereby they are inſtructed in the Knowledge of theſe Things, and whereby they are in a peculiar manner enabled to practiſe them. *Titus* ii. 11. *For the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, teaching us that denying Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, we* *ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly and godly in this preſent World.* In other Places, they are by the ſame Apoſtle called the *Fruits of the Spirit*; not only becauſe they are internal and proceed from the Intention and Diſpoſition of the Mind, but becauſe they were delivered and enforced by the *Spirit of God* inſpiring the firſt Teachers of the Goſpel, and working Miracles in Confirmation of the Truth of their Miſſion. Gal. v. 22. *The Fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith, meekneſs and temperance.* Theſe Inſtances ſhow plainly the Nature and Deſign of the Chriſtian Revelation, and what Principles it is built upon. It was neceſſary to be thus particular in examining what the proper Objects of the Powers and Faculties of Mens Minds are, and in what Manner they are to be exerciſed and applied; that we might ſee wherein *Vertue* and *Vice*, moral *Good* and *Evil* properly conſiſt. And from what has been ſaid, it is evident that there are in the *Nature* and *Reaſon* of Things, *Laws* and *Rules* of Action peculiarly adapted to the Diſpoſitions and Faculties of rational and voluntary Agents: In their conforming to which Laws, there is as much Harmony and Regularity, tho' of a different Kind, as there is in the Laws of Motion, by which the material World is govern'd. 'Tis evident alſo, that the ſame Laws and Rules are moreover according to the *Will* of God: Who, as He is himſelf infinitely wiſe, juſt and good; and knows what is fitteſt and beſt to be done under every Circumſtance; and always conforms his own Actions to the eternal and unalterable Reaſon of Things; ſo 'tis his *Will*, that every one of his Creatures ſhould walk by the ſame unerring Rules, proportionably to their reſpective Capacities and Stations in the World. Which *Will* he has ſignifyed to them in their original Frame and Conſtitution, by thoſe Faculties He has given them, and the Objects He has ſuited to them; and which He has alſo ſignified by the ſeveral ſupernatural *Revelations*, built upon and confirming the Laws of Nature.

*The Motives that are proper to influence an intelligent and free Agent.*

I come in the next Place to conſider what are the proper *Motives* and *Inducements*, in the moſt effectual Manner poſſible to promote and procure the Practice of *moral Good* or Vertue, and to hinder or prevent the Practiſe of *moral Evil* or Vice; *viz.* The *Sanction* of the forementioned Laws. By the Faculty of *Underſtanding*, Men are enabled to ſee what is their Duty, to diſcern whether ſuch and ſuch Things be agreeable or diſagreeable to the Laws of Truth and Right, and becoming their Circumſtances and Condition. By the *Diſpoſitions* or *Affections* of their Mind, they are inclined or have a natural Tendency to do thoſe Things which they ſee to be true and right, and an Averſion to what they know to be falſe and unjuſt; But it is the *ſelf-motive Principle* alone, by which they are capable of acting or forbearing to act according to the forementioned Laws. Each of *Theſe*, as they are of a different *Nature* and *Kind*, ſo muſt they be applyed to in a different *Manner*. There are *moral* Ends, as well as *natural* Ends; and there are Means ſuitable to them Both, which ought not to be miſapplyed or confounded. In *natural* Things, the Cauſes and Effects are always proportioned to each other, and are inſeparable; ſuch Cauſes always acting by Way of natural neceſſary Efficiency: But in *moral* Actions, the Caſe is quite different; there is no *Efficiency* at all *There*, every Action depends intirely upon the mere Principle of Self-motion in the Agent; And in *This*, the very Eſſence of Morality conſiſts. Take this away, and all Vertue and Vice is immediately deſtroyed. For if we ſuppoſe any other real Agency, than what is *from* the acting Being it ſelf, 'tis ſo far none of his; He is in that Reſpect acted upon, and only an Inſtrument in the Hands of another. And as the Action is none of his; ſo, whatever there be in it, Good or Evil, it is none of his likewiſe;

neither is there any Morality in it, nor can He be accountable for it. But though there be no ſuch Thing as *natural Efficiency* in the Buſineſs of Morality, yet there are proper Motives and Inducements, which may *affect* a Being indued with Liberty; and be the *Occaſion*, though not the Cauſe, of his chooſing to act one Way rather than another, without at all diminiſhing ſuch Liberty. And theſe depend upon the *Being's* having other Faculties and Diſpoſitions joyned with ſuch Liberty. Now this is the Caſe in Man: He is not only a *voluntary* Agent, but alſo an *intelligent* and *rational* Agent. And the proper Method to apply to Underſtanding and Reaſon, is by Truth and Argument. For as ſoon as any Truths in Morality are propoſed to the Underſtanding, it cannot help perceiving them; and as ſoon as the Connection between ſuch Truths is made appear, it cannot help being convinced: *Moral Truth* therefore may be a *Rule* of Action to a free Agent endued with Underſtanding; and This does not at all diminiſh his *Liberty.* The Power of acting or forbearing to act, is juſt the ſame as it was before; For Underſtanding and Reaſon are no *Subſtances*, and conſequently have no natural Power and Efficiency to produce Action. And the ſame may be ſaid alſo of the Diſpoſitions and Affections of the Mind. It is not inconſiſtent with Reaſon and Liberty, that there ſhould be planted in the ſame Subject, an *Inclination* towards, and a *Love* for, Truth and Right; and alſo an *Averſion* and Hatred to Falſehood and Wrong. Theſe may be excited by Perſuaſion, and by placing the proper

Objects before them; and may *induce* a free Agent, but they cannot *force* him to comply with them whether He will or no. Beſides theſe, there are other Sorts of Paſſions, ſuch as *Hope* and *Fear*; which ariſe from a Principle of Self-love and Preſervation, deeply rooted in every Man; which have alſo their peculiar Influence upon ſuch a Being as Man is. From ſome or all of theſe Principles ariſes every Motive and Encouragement to perform any vertuous Action; and upon theſe Accounts are the Actions *good* or *evil* with Reſpect to the Perſon who *does* them, worthy of Praiſe or Blame, of Reward or Puniſhment. The mere Power of acting or forbearing to act, is a natural Perfection; but there is no *moral* good or *evil* in it abſtractly conſidered; any more than there is in any other Thing, indifferent in it ſelf, and capable of being uſed or abuſed.

*Theſe Motives ſuppoſe ſome Law or Rule, for the Agent to conform himſelf to.*

Morality therefore ſuppoſes that there ſhould be ſome *Law* or Rule of Action. And this includes a *Knowledge* of ſuch *Law* or Rule, either *natural* or *revealed* ; and a Proſpect of *Happineſs* upon complying with the Terms of the Law, either reſulting from the Nature of the Things, or elſe a voluntary Recompenſe. This is very well expreſſed by the Prophet *Hoſea*, when He ſays of the Children of *Iſrael*, that when they were fallen from the Worſhip of the true God, *He drew them with the Cords of a Man, with the Bands of Love*; *Ch.* xi. *ver.* 4. that is, with ſuch Arguments and Motives as were calculated to the State and Circumſtances That People were in.

And this, the Inſtances we every where find in Scripture, and the Method there taken to inforce Vertue and diſcourage Vice, plainly ſhow. The Nature of Man's Duty is laid before Him in the moſt expreſs and eaſy Terms, and illuſtrated by the moſt familiar Similitudes, that every Capacity might be able to comprehend it in one View or another: The moſt powerful Exhortations and Perſuaſions are made Uſe of, to influence the Affections; The brighteſt Examples are ſet forth to excite Men to Imitation; and proportionable Rewards and Puniſhments are laid before them to raiſe their Expectations. Thus it appears from conſulting the Frame and Conſtitution of Man, the Faculties and Diſpoſitions of his Mind, the Paſſions and Affections of his Body; that every one of them has its proper Object, and that there is a certain Degree or Manner of Application neceſſary in the Nature of them to produce their genuine Effects. And by comparing Men with other Beings, and with each other, and ſeeing their mutual Relation and Dependence, it appears alſo what are thoſe ſeveral Duties which they owe to each other, and the correſpondent Obligations they are under to diſcharge them.

*Whence it is that Man is capable of committing Sin.*

By this Means we ſhall be able to form a Judgment what Sort of Creature Man is, what He is capable of, and in what Manner He is to be applyed to. And on the other Hand, we ſhall alſo be enabled to ſee how he comes to fall ſhort of that Perfection which he was originally deſigned for. We ſhall ſee *whence* it is that He perverts and abuſes the Powers of his Mind, and the Inclinations of his Body; and whence it is that He becomes ſo corrupt and miſerable. Becauſe there muſt be ſome Imperfection either in the Underſtanding or the Will, or the Appetites; or elſe the Being would not be capable of committing Sin, ſince every Sin conſiſts in a Defect or Abuſe of one or more of theſe; Therefore in God Almighty, who is infinite in all Perfections, who knows what is fitteſt to be done in every Reſpect, has a perfect Rectitude of Will, is always diſpoſed to do what is beſt, can be hindred by no Power, can be drawn aſide by no Temptation or Intereſt, has no bodily Paſſions or Affections to entice Him; for Theſe Reaſons, I ſay, in God Almighty there can be no Poſſibility of Sin: But in all other Beings, of how exalted a Nature and Station ſoever, there muſt be a *Poſſibility* of their erring and miſtaking in ſome Particulars; though they may have ſo clear a Knowledge of their Duty, ſo ſtrong a Diſpoſition towards it, and ſo few Temptations to deviate from it, that their Errors and Miſtakes may be comparatively very few and ſmall. And ſuch Sort of Beings Angels ſeem to be: They have (probably) Bodies as well as Men, but they are of a very different Sort; as different, to uſe St *Paul's* Compariſon, as cœleſtial Bodies are from terreſtrial ones. They are neither produced nor maintained in the ſame Manner that humane Bodies are; and conſequently have not the ſame Appetites. All thoſe Sins therefore that are occaſioned by the Imperfections and Wants of humane Bodies, Angels and glorified Spirits

I Cor. xv.

rits can have no Means or Opportunity of committing. For where there is neither Hunger nor Thirſt nor Warineſs, there can be neither Gluttony nor Drunkenneſs nor Idleneſs; Where there is no marrying or giving in Marriage, there can be no Whoremongers nor Adulterers nor Fornicators; And where there is no worldly Mammon, there can be no Unrighteouſneſs, Covetouſneſs or Theft. From the Circumſtances of ſuch Beings therefore, ſo different from thoſe of Mankind, 'tis very evident that they cannot be guilty of ſuch Sort of Crimes. But of thoſe which the *Mind* is incident to, and which may ariſe from that Relation which theſe Beings ſtand in to each other and to God Almighty; ſuch as Pride, Ambition and falſe Worſhip; theſe and ſuch like, they may be guilty of. And the Inſtance given in Scripture of the fallen Angels, is a ſufficient Confirmation of it. And there may be other Sorts of Crimes, which the particular Frame and Conſtitution even of cœleſtial Beings may render them incident to. But as Man is of a middle Nature, and partakes of the intellectual Powers and Faculties in common with the Angels, and alſo of the ſenſual Appetites and Deſires in common with the Brute Creatures; He muſt under theſe Circumſtances be perpetually *liable* to be impoſed upon and deceived by the Objects of Senſe, dictating Things different from the Objects of Reaſon.

*Whence the Cauſe of the actual Commiſſion of Sin.*

And hence the Cauſe and Origin of every moral Evil, of the *actual* Commiſſion of ſo much Sin and Wickedneſs as we ſee practiſed in the World every Day, notwithſtanding the Creator is infinitely wiſe and good; is very plain and evident. 'Tis the *Abuſe* of that *Liberty* which God Almighty has endued every Man with; which was intended for their Benefit and Perfection, and which they themſelves pervert to their own Miſchief and Ruin. That ſuch *Liberty* is in it ſelf an excellent Gift, muſt be acknowledged by every one, who thinks there is any Difference betwixt mere *Appetite* and *Reaſon*, betwixt an *Animal* and a *Rational* Life, and the Enjoyments and Happineſs peculiar to each of them. That there are Some Subjects in their own Nature uncapable of having this Faculty planted in them, as all mere material Things however modifyed or diverſifyed; and that there are other Subjects capable of being endued with ſuch a Faculty, in the Uſe or Abuſe of which they muſt by unavoidable Conſequence very much improve or deprave themſelves; is alſo manifeſt to any one who conſiders the Nature and Properties of material and immaterial Subſtances. But on *which* of thoſe Subjects that are capable of receiving this Power, God Almighty will actually confer it; and on what Conditions, and under what particular Circumſtances; this is manifeſtly arbitrary, and depends entirely upon his *Will.* The Perfection and Order of the Univerſe requires, that there ſhould be Variety in *Theſe* as well as all other Reſpects: And there could be no *Harmony* or Beauty in the *moral* World, any more than there could be in the natural World, without *ſuch Differences.* It is therefore in it ſelf reaſonable and fit, that ſuch a *Power* ſhould be given to ſome Creatures; and that their other *Deſigns* and *Propenſions* ſhould be ſo ſtrong, as to anſwer, as far as is poſſible, the End for which *they* were deſigned, conſiſtent with this Power. And from hence it muſt needs be, that whenever ſuch a compound Being, inſtead of determining it ſelf according to the Dictates of Reaſon, yields to the Suggeſtions of Senſe and Paſſion; it muſt fall into the Commiſſion of Sin, that is, act contrary to the Nature and Reaſon of Things, and ſubvert the Order and Harmony eſtabliſhed in the Creation.

*The ſame thing confirmed by Scripture.*

And to *This Original*, the Scripture aſcribes the Sins and Vices of Mankind in general. Thus St *Paul* in the *7th Ch.* to the *Romans*, which deſignedly treats of this Subject, is very plain and expreſs in deſcribing the State and

Condition of Man in this Reſpect, and the Manner how he came into it. He ſuppoſes, according to St *John's* Definition, *that all Sin is the Tranſgreſſion of a Law.* And his Argument is equally ſtrong, whatever Law we apply it to; whether the Law of Nature, or the Law of *Moſes,* or any other Law. For though they may differ in ſome particular Circumſtances; yet the End and Deſign, *viz.* procuring Obedience to the Precepts of them; and the Method of doing it, *viz.* by the Sanction of the Law; is one and the ſame in them all. At the 12th *ver.* the Apoſtle ſays, *that the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, just and good.* In This Reſpect then, there is no Ground of Complaint. God Almighty, who made Man, has a Right to preſcribe Laws to him; Which

I Epiſt. Ch. iii. 4.

Laws are ſuch as Mens preſent State and Circumſtances require, and ſuch as in their own Nature tend moſt directly and immediately to promote the Happineſs and Welfare of Mankind. But if this be ſo, then follows the Query, v. 13. *was then that which is good, made death unto me?* If the Law be holy, juſt and good, then, may any one ask, how could it be the *Cauſe* of the Sins of Men, and of that Death which is the Conſequence of Sin? To which the Apoſtle anſwers in the following Words: *God forbid: but Sin that it might appear Sin, working Death in me by that which is good; that Sin by the Commandment might become exceeding ſinful.* Which is as much as if He had ſaid: This is a very falſe Repreſentation of the Matter: For the *Deſign* of the Law was indeed directly the contrary;

*viz.* to prevent Sin, and That Death which attends it: And therefore the very Buſineſs of the Law, is to make ſuch a Repreſentation of the Natute and Malignity of Sin, as, if duly attended to, would create in Men a juſt Odium and Abhorrence of it; and ſo to ſet forth the evil Conſequences of the Practice of Sin, as might excite in Men a juſt Dread of the Puniſhment due to Tranſgreſſours. This is manifeſtly the Deſign of the Law; And this is all, that 'tis poſſible for *That* to do. But if the Event proves contrary, and, inſtead of producing its genuine Effect in Men by bringing them to Obedience, they obſtinately reſiſt all its Motives, deſpiſe its Threats, and do the very Things that are there forbidden; 'tis very true that they are then in a much worſe State than they were before; and the Law, inſtead of making them happy, has made them miſerable. But where is the Fault? not in the Law, for That is confeſſedly good in every Reſpect: But that which is in its own Nature *good*, though it cannot be the *Cauſe*, yet it may be the *Occaſion* of very great *Evil*: And this depends wholly upon the *Will* of the Subject. He brings it voluntarily upon himſelf; And as *there* the *Evil* lights, ſo alſo muſt the Condemnation of it. Whatever is *uſeful*, muſt in the Nature of Things be liable to be *abuſed*: And the greater and more univerſal the Good conſequent thereupon is, the greater and more univerſal will the poſſible Evil be alſo. In *material* things we have given many Inſtances of this; And the ſame may be affirmed of *immaterial* Things likewiſe, *viz.* of the Powers and Faculties of the Mind. This may be applyed to the preſent Caſe. 'Tis fit that every proper *Means* ſhould be made Uſe of to prevent Sin. Now ſuppoſe a particular Sin, ſuch as Adultery, for Inſtance, be ſpecifyed by the Law, and the Puniſhment of Death annexed to the Commiſſion of it: If any Perſon be ſuppoſed to be before ignorant of the Nature of the Crime and of the Puniſhment, and that he came to the Knowledge of them Both, by the Law; 'tis evident that if, after this, he commits this Crime, the Law is the *Occaſion* both of his *Sin* and of his *Death*. And if we regard the *Event*, *only* with Reſpect to this particular Perſon; it had been better there had been no Law at all. And the ſame holds true of all other particular Sins. And this is the Solution St *Paul* himſelf gives of this Matter, *ver.* 7 and 8. *What ſhall we ſay then, is the Law Sin? God forbid: nay I had not known Sin, but by the Law; for I had not known Luſt, except the Law had ſaid, thou ſhalt not covet; but Sin taking Occaſion by the Commandment, wrought in me all Manner of Concupiſcence; for without the Law, Sin is dead.* That is; nothing can be more abſurd than for Men to reflect upon the Law, as if That were it ſelf *evil,* which is only the *Meaſure* of *good* and *evil* to rational Beings; that which teaches them *wherein* good and evil conſiſts. For we could not have known what *Right* and *Wrong* is, we could not have told what Bounds to ſet to our Paſſions and Appetites, if no Law, neither natural nor revealed, had preſcribed them to us. This was abſolutely neceſſary to be done; and yet this is the *Occaſion* of all Manner of Iniquity. For it being the Nature of a Law, only to recommend, and not abſolutely to force; Mens *Reaſon* and *Judgment* may be thereby convinced of the Excellency and Goodneſs of ſuch and ſuch particular Things, and yet at the ſame Time their *Paſſions* may ſo far prevail upon them, that they may *act* directly contrary to what they *know* to be juſt and right. And in this Senſe it is, that the Law is ſaid to work in Men all Manner of Concupiſcence; for without the Law Sin is dead, or, as it is elſewhere explained by the ſame Apoſtle, *Where there is no Law there is no Tranſgreſſion*: that is, Men cannot break through a Boundary where there is none ſet.

Rom. IV. 15.

*This Account agreeable to every Man's own Experience.*

And to ſhow that this is a true Solution, we may make the ſame Appeal that the Apoſtle does, to every Man's own Experience; and ask him *if he does not delight in the Law of God after the inward Man*; Rom. vii. 22; if his Mind does not freely aſſent to what is reaſonable and juſt; and not only ſo, but has a Complacency and Satisfaction in it: But at the ſame Time, He *ſees* or experiences *another Law in his Members, warring againſt this Law of his Mind, and bringing him into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which is in his Members*; that is, drawing him off from thoſe Things which Reaſon and Conſcience dictate, to thoſe which are ſuggeſted by Senſe and Paſſion. *ver.* 22, 23. And thus it muſt be, whilſt Men are in the Fleſh, whilſt they carry theſe frail Bodies about them:

*The Motions of Sin which are by the Law*, or the Inclinations to ſatisfy the Luſts and Appetites of the Body, beyond what is fit and reaſonable; *will work in their Members, to bring forth Fruit unto Death*, ver. 5.

*Hence we are enabled to anſwer the Objections of the antient Academicks.*

And this Conſideration affords us a plain Anſwer to the Objection of the antient Academicks, *viz.* * *That Mans being made a reaſonable Creature, is the Foundation of all his Sin and Miſery; and that therefore it had been better for him, never to have been endued with that Faculty at all, than that ſuch evil Conſequences ſhould have attended it.* This Argument, if it proves any Thing, proves too much: it takes away the Foundation of all *Ver-*

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*Satius fuerit nullam omnino nobis a Diis immortalibus datam eſſe Rationem, quam tanta cum pernicie datam: *Cic. de Nat. Deor. Lib.* III. § 27.

*tue* as well as *Vice*, of all Reward as well as Puniſhment: For where there is neither Underſtanding nor Liberty, there can be neither *moral* good nor evil; and Men are at once deprived of all That Happineſs which ariſes from the Exerciſe of their intellectual Powers, and which may be freely conferred upon them as a Reward for their paſt Behaviour. And where theſe Faculties or Powers are given at all, they muſt be permitted to exert themſelves; otherwiſe it is the ſame Thing as if they had not been given at all. Wherefore this is in effect to ſay, that it is inconſiſtent with the Notion we have of God, that He ſhould make any intelligent and free Agents at all; that He ſhould give them ſuch Excellencies and Perfections, and command them to make a right Uſe of them. Which is to take away the Power and Authority of the Deity, to abridge him of the Right He has to create all Sorts of Beings, and to govern them by ſuch Laws as their Nature and Circumſtances require.

The Fallacy of this Argument lies in theſe *two* Particulars; that ſuch Judgment is made *partially*, and that 'tis made from the *Event* only. *Firſt*, 'Tis very true, that it had been better for all thoſe *particular* Perſons who have abuſed their Reaſon and Liberty ſo far, as to make themſelves miſerable; it had been better, I ſay, for *Them* conſidered *partially* and *alone*, that there had been no ſuch Perfections in the World: In like Manner as it had been better for all *thoſe particular* Perſons who have fallen by the Edge of the Sword, that there ſhould have been no ſuch Thing as *Iron* created. But this is no

Reaſon why all *other* Perſons ſhould be deprived of all the Advantages that They can make of what theſe Men turn to their own Deſtruction; and that every Opportunity ſhould be taken from them of making themſelves happy, becauſe theſe Men abuſe the ſame Means to their own Miſery. Neither is this any Reaſon why God Almighty ſhould not, in vertue of his own Authority, commit ſuch Talents to the Charge of his Servants, and command them to exerciſe and improve them, as they will anſwer it to Him.

But *Secondly*, with Reſpect to the *Event*: The Queſtion is not properly what *will* be, but what *ought* to be. Put the Caſe as in our Saviour's Similitude. A Maſter, who has a Right to his Servants Labour, delivers to every one of them a proportionable

Matt. XX.

Number of Talents to improve, according to their ſeveral Capacities and Abilities; and expects that they ſhould employ them in ſuch and ſuch a Manner. Now ſuppoſe not only One, but the greateſt Number of theſe Servants, hide their Talents in a Napkin: Would it from thence follow, that the Expectations of the Maſter were unreaſonable? that He ought not to have committed ſuch Talents to their Charge? or that there ought not to have been, or for the future there ſhould be no ſuch Thing as Servants at all? Juſt ſuch a Conſequence is That drawn from the *Event* of *Mens* Actions. God has given every one of them Talents both of Mind and Body; and He requires no more of them than a proportionable Uſe and Improvement according to their ſeveral Capacities, Opportunities and Circumſtances. And whatever Number of them fail in this, it is no Objection againſt the Thing in general. It was fit and reaſonable that ſuch Faculties and Powers ſhould be given them, to carry on that Sort of Life which they were intended to lead; and there were no other Hindrances in the Way, than what are the neceſſary Reſult of their preſent Circumſtances and Condition. Wherefore the Blame will lie wholly upon themſelves, and God Almighty will be fully juſtified.

*Of the Sin of our firſt Parents.*

What has been before ſaid concerning the Nature and Sanction of Laws in general, and the Effects that may be occaſioned by them, may be applied to Any Law in particular, and will equally hold good. For the Deſign of them all is the ſame, *viz.* to be a Rule or Meaſure of Action to all Perſons to whom they are preſcribed. And that this may the more fully appear, and that we may be able to give a diſtinct Anſwer to the fore-mentioned Objections in their full Force; we will examine the State of our firſt Parents, and ſee how *Sin* entred into the World, and by what Means it has continued ever ſince. Though there be no *natural* Means of knowing *Who* committed the firſt Sin, nor in what that Sin particularly conſiſted; yet in general, it is evident from Analogy, from what we know and experience in our ſelves and others, that it muſt proceed from the ſame Cauſe that all Other Sins proceed; though the Occaſion, Opportunity or Aggravation might be very particular. For as the firſt Man was made of the ſame Materials as all Men ſince are, was endued with the ſame Powers and

Faculties of Mind, had the ſame Diſpoſitions and Inclinations of Body; it cannot be, but that he muſt be liable to the ſame Sort of Temptations, and conſequently capable of complying with the Dictates of Senſe and Appetite, contrary to the Direction of Reaſon and the Conviction of his own Mind. And from hence it is that the firſt Sin proceeded. But the Particulars of it, can be had only from Revelation; for there are no Remains of natural Hiſtory ſo antient as to give us any certain Account of this Matter, except ſome fabulous Stories amongſt the Heathen Mythologiſts, which ſeem to be taken from Scripture or Tradition. To the Old Teſtament alone therefore we muſt have Recourſe for Information in this particular. And here we have a very ſhort Account who the Perſon was, alſo what the Sin it ſelf was, and the Manner in which it was committed. As the Deſign of the ſacred Writings was not to ſatisfy Mens vain Curioſities with Philoſophical Enquiries, or natural Hiſtories; but only to inſtruct them in ſuch Things as regard Religion, and the Practiſe of their Duty; therefore we find them very clear and exact in all thoſe Parts in which Religion is concerned; but in other Circumſtances which are foreign to it, and come in only incidentally, they are not ſo exact, but ſpeak of them in the common Method, and agreeably to the received Notions at the Time of writing them. And hence it is, that in Theſe Matters they are for the moſt part ſo conciſe. Becauſe to Poſterity, for whoſe Benefit and Advantage the Record is made, ſuch Things can be of Uſe *only in the general,* (for it can never happen that the ſame Set of Circumſtances ſhould come over again, exactly alike in every Reſpect; and if any one be different, the Parallel will not hold good;) therefore the fewer ſuch Circumſtances are, the more applicable and uſeful is the Inſtance. Thus in the Caſe before us, concerning the original or firſt Sin, which was committed by the firſt Parents of Mankind; it takes up but a very little Compaſs, tho' it be of ſo great Moment to be known. Nevertheleſs the Repreſentation is ſo juſt, that, whatever Difficulties there may be in ſome particular Expreſſions, which were either perſonal, or related to the peculiar Circumſtances of *Adam* and *Eve*; yet the general Thing intended to be declared to the whole World, *viz.* how Sin entered into it, and what the Effect and Conſequence of it was, is moſt evident and perſpicuous.

*The Original State of our firſt Parents.*

Though every Part of the Creation is ſtyled *good*; and therefore there is no doubt but this whole Earth was originally furniſhed with every thing neceſſary for the Support and Convenience of all its Inhabitants, particularly of Man; yet this does not hinder, but that ſome Parts of it might naturally be better than others; and capable of being made much more ſo, by ſome extraordinary Care and Improvement. And thus the Place where our firſt Parents were put, is repreſented; Gen. II. 8, 9. *And the Lord God planted a Garden Eaſtward in Eden, and there He put the Man whom he had formed; and out of the Ground made the Lord God to grow* *every Tree that is pleaſant to the Sight, and good for Food: the Tree of Life alſo in the midſt of the Garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil.* We cannot conceive ſuch a Creature as Man, to be put into a more happy State than this. The Ground naturally, without any Labour or Trouble, brought forth every Thing that was neceſſary and convenient, and alſo every Thing that was pleaſant and delightful; So that there was nothing for Man to do, but to dreſs and to keep the Garden for his Diverſion, *ver.* 15; and to ſatisfy himſelf with all the Variety which it afforded.

*Of the Tree of Knowledge, and the Reaſonableneſs of the Prohibition of it.*

All this Plenty could proceed only from a moſt loving and beneficent Being. And it was fit that the Perſon on whom it was beſtowed, ſhould be made ſenſible of this, that he might return ſuitable Acknowledgement to the great Author of his Happineſs. Wherefore God Almighty reſerved one Tree in the Garden, as a Teſtimony of *His* Sovereignty and *Man*'s Obedience; *Of every Tree of the Garden thou mayſt freely eat, but of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, thou ſhalt not eat of it; for in the Day that thou eateſt thereof, thou ſhalt ſurely die.* ver. 16, 17. What there was particular in this Tree, the Scripture ſays not; and therefore it is in vain for us to conjecture. And why it is called the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, is not very certain; there being no other Effects mentioned in the Text to follow the eating of it, but only this, that whereas it was ſaid before, *ch.* II. 25, *that they were both naked, the Man and his*

*Wife, and were not aſhamed*; it is now ſaid *ch. III.* 7, *that the Eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked*;—*wherefore they were afraid and hid themſelves.* But whatever the Particulars were, which were of Perſonal Concern to our firſt Parents only; the General Thing which is of Uſe to all their Poſterity is very plain. They had a poſitive Precept given them by the expreſs Authority of God himſelf; the Nature, Reaſon and Circumſtances of which, were in themſelves very juſt and fit. For whilſt there were but two Perſons in the World, the Duties of Morality, which are founded in the ſeveral Relations that Men ſtand in to each other, were very few. If, according to St. *Paul*'s Diviſion, we reduce them to theſe three Heads, Sobriety, Righteouſneſs, and

Godlineſs, correſponding to the Relation we ſtand in to our ſelves, our Neighbour, and God Almighty; we ſhall find that our firſt Parents were capable of tranſgreſſing theſe grand Precepts, in but few Inſtances. That plain and ſimple Way of living, which was intended for them, *viz.* in a Garden, and upon the Fruit which That afforded; could not expoſe them to much Intemperance or Luxury. The natural Deſires of Hunger and Thirſt are ſoon ſatisfied; and it is wholly owing to Art and Abuſe, that they are worked up beyond their due Pitch; as is evident in thoſe inferiour Creatures, who live in the ſame Way, and yet never run into any Exceſs. With Reſpect to our Neighbour, which is the moſt univerſal and comprehenſive Duty, including every Thing that is due to Superiours, Equals and Inferiours; the Opporutnities of tranſgreſſing were ſtill fewer here, becauſe there were no Superiours or Inferiours, and of Equals but two; So that this large Branch of Morality was reduced to the narrow Compaſs of mutual Friendſhip. And of the ſix Precepts of the ſecond Table, there was but one in their Power to break, *viz.* That againſt Murder. For as to honouring their Parents, committing Adultery, Theft, Falſe-witneſs, and Covetouſneſs; there were no Objects of theſe. Laſtly, With Regard to their Duty towards God, nothing could be more plain and viſible than his Loving-kindneſs towards them, not only in giving them Being, but alſo in providing them a beautiful Habitation filled with all Manner of Plenty. The leaſt Conſideration of this, could not but raiſe in them the deepeſt Acknowledgment of Gratitude, and put them upon returning the higheſt Praiſe and Thankſgiving to ſo beneficent and gracious a Sovereign. Neither had they any Thing to tempt them to Idolatry: Other Gods and Lords, beſides Him who made them, and with whom they had frequent Converſation, they knew none; Wherefore as none claimed any Authority over them, ſo they paid no Obedience to them. In theſe happy Circumſtances were our firſt Parents placed; and ſuitable to this Condition, was the Duty that God required of them. He was their Lord and Governour, and They his Creatures and Subjects. It was therefore fit that He ſhould preſcribe proper Laws to them, and that They ſhould willingly comply with them; Otherwiſe there would have been no Room for God Almighty to act the Part of a Governour or a Judge, or for Them to exerciſe thoſe Faculties of Mind they were endued with, agreeable to his Will. A leſs Reſtriction was impoſſible, than the Prohibition of one ſingle Tree in the whole Garden: Yet this was all that God reſerved to himſelf, to be a ſtanding Inſtance, that He would be acknowledged as their Supreme; that this ſhould be a Teſt of their Obedience, and a publick Memorial of their Dependence upon Him. Wherefore He commanded them, as they had any Regard to his Authority or their own Happineſs, that they ſhould forbear eating of it; And as a Sanction hereof, He told them, that the Day that they eat of it, they ſhould ſurely die. How great the Priviledge of Life was, they who enjoyed it with ſo much Eaſe and Pleaſure, could not but be very ſenſible, and conſequently as deſirous to have it continued to them: And whilſt they remained innocent, they had no Reaſon to fear being any way deprived of it, but on the contrary a very reaſonable Aſſurance of having it prolonged, from the Experience of the Goodneſs of God in firſt giving them Life, and a further Confirmation of it in the *Tree of Life* planted in the midſt of the Garden for their Preſervation. The *Condition* of Life depended entirely upon forbearing to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. 'Tis manifeſt therefore, both from the Words of the Threatning, and from what followed afterwards, that the Meaning of the Condition was This: That as they were originally made mortal, and their

Life was preſerved by the *Tree of Life*; the Puniſhment of their Tranſgreſſion ſhould be, to have this Tree, this extraordinary Means of Life, taken from them; and then of Courſe the common Law of Mortality would take place, and they muſt in a few Years return to that Duſt out of which they were taken.

*This Prohibition, the Occaſion of the Sin of our firſt Parents.*

This was the Nature and End of that Command given to our firſt Parents. And ſo reaſonable was it in it ſelf, ſo plain to the Underſtanding, and ſo eaſy to be practiſed, that one would think there ſhould have been no Danger of their tranſgreſſing it. Yet ſuch was the original Conſtitution of Man, and ſuch the Circumſtances of Things, that He did not long continue in a State of Innocence. Where there is a Mixture of *Underſtanding* and *Paſſi-*

*on* in the ſame Subject, the Objects of which are very different; they muſt ſometimes interfere with each other: And conſequently ſuch a Being will be *liable* to act according to the Dictates of Paſſion; *Inclination* will ſometimes prevail againſt *Reaſon.* And where there are any *Other* Beings concerned, *Their* Tranſactions may alſo be a *Means* or *Occaſion* of helping forward any Action. And to theſe Cauſes the Scripture aſcribes the Commiſſion of the firſt Sin: *The Woman ſaw that the Tree was good for Food, and that it was pleaſant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be deſired to make one wiſe*; Gen. iii. 6. This was the Effect of *Paſſion*, and of not attending to her own Reaſon and Experience. For theſe would quickly have convinced her, that ſhe placed her Deſire upon a wrong Object. *For out of the Ground made the Lord God to grow every Tree that was pleaſant to the Sight, and good for Food,* Ch. ii. 9. *of every one of which ſhe might freely eat,* v. 16. Theſe were ſufficient to ſatisfy her reaſonable Deſires: And it muſt be great voluntary Careleſsneſs, to be deluded by the Beauty of this One, after it was expreſsly forbidden. With Regard to the Precept, as ſuch, it was impoſſible to be miſunderſtood: The meaneſt Capacity could apprehend, what it was to forbear eating of ſuch a particular Tree ſpecifyed by Name. But any further than the Fact was concerned, it was poſſible to miſunderſtand it. The Denomination of the Tree, *viz.* *of Knowledge of Good and Evil,* was capable of ſeveral Senſes; As likewiſe were the Words of the Threatning annexed,

nexed, *Thou ſhalt ſurely die*: But the right Apprehenſion of theſe, was no Part of their Duty. To obey the Command of God, their great Benefactour and Governour, in the Inſtance given, was all that was required of them; And here there was not the leaſt Pretenſe either of Ignorance or Inability or any thing elſe.

*Of the Tranſaction of the Serpent.*

The remaining Part, is the Tranſaction betwixt the Serpent and the Woman. It is plain by the Text, that the Serpent gave a falſe Turn to the Words of the Commandment; and deceived the Woman by putting ſuch a Senſe upon them, as before ſhe did not underſtand them in. The Threatning of Death was intended to ſtrike a Terror in Her, and the Apprehenſion of it contained ſomething very dreadful. The Serpent, to take off this Dread, told Her, *ch.* iii. 4 and 5, *that they ſhould not ſurely die; for God knew, that in the day that they eat thereof, their eyes ſhould be opened, and they ſhould be as Gods knowing good and evil.* Here, it is evident, were *Two* things, by which the Woman was impoſed upon. The *one* was, that She was not ſo to underſtand the Words of the Threatning, as if, immediately upon eating of this Tree, ſhe ſhould certainly be deprived of Life, and conſequently of all future Enjoyment; which Deceit was uſed in order to abate the juſt Fears ſhe might have entertained upon that Account. The *other* was, that as this Tree was called the *Tree of Knowledge of good and evil,* the eating of it would enlarge her Underſtanding, and make her wiſer. And This was ſuggeſted, in order to excite the oppoſite Paſſion of *Deſire.* For the Love of Knowledge was originally planted in the Mind of Man: And *That Knowledge* which was conceived to belong peculiarly to the *Gods*, whatever it conſiſted in, muſt be more apt to work upon this natural Deſire. This was the Manner, in which the Woman was prevailed upon to act contrary to the expreſs Command of God. And her Sin conſiſted plainly in this, that ſhe hearkned to the Inſinuation of the Serpent, rather than to the Words of God; and ſuffered herſelf to be governed by the Impreſſions of external Objects, rather than by the Dictates of her Reaſon and Conſcience. Which was both great Weakneſs, and Folly. How this Tranſaction betwixt the Woman and the Serpent was performed, is not ſaid; and therefore it is in vain to conjecture. The Text mentions no other Particular, than that the *Serpent*, (whatever is thereby meant) was *more ſubtile than any beaſt of the field which the Lord God had made*; and therefore, as St *Paul* expreſſes it, 2 *Cor.* xi, 30, *through his Subtilty he beguiled Eve.* Thus we ſee how Sin firſt entred into the World. And this Repreſentation of it, is ſufficient for Inſtruction and Example to all Poſterity. And had it been thus conſidered and applyed, without mixing any Conjectures of Mens own, or endeavouring to explain particular Circumſtances which are impoſſible to be certainly known; all Foundation would have been taken away, of thoſe many unjuſt Reflections which have been caſt upon this Hiſtory.

Gen. iii. 1.

And

*Of the Puniſhment threatned to the Tranſgreſſion.*

And as the Sin and the Manner of committing it, is thus plainly deſcribed; ſo alſo is the Puniſhment that was inflicted on the Tranſgreſſours, and the Effects and Conſequences thereof. The firſt of which, was the natural Senſe of their own Minds, that they had done a thing which they were conſcious to themſelves they ought not to have done: And this raiſed in them a juſt Dread of that Being, whoſe Authority and Beneficence they had deſpiſed in violating his expreſs Command; And therefore we find that they endeavoured to retire from the immediate Preſence of God, *ch.* iii. 8. *And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the Garden, in the cool of the day; and Adam and his Wife hid themſelves from the preſence of the Lord God amongſt the trees of the Garden.*

This was ſuch a Puniſhment as was the neceſſary Conſequence of Guilt. But beſide this, there was a poſitive Puniſhment inflicted upon them, in *common*, and in *particular*. The Puniſhment *common* to them *Both*, was, that they were driven out of the Garden, and conſequently deprived of all the Priviledges and Advantages of that happy Place. The principal of theſe, was the Tree of Life: Which ſince they were no longer ſuffered to approach, in order to repair the Decays of Nature; the common Law of Mortality took Place; and they muſt in the Courſe of Things, after a few Years, be reſolved into their original Principles, and return to that Duſt out of which they were taken. The *particular* Puniſhment to the *Man*, was, that from dreſſing and keeping a Garden which brought forth naturally great Plenty of every thing for Food and for Pleaſure; he ſhould for the remaining Part of his Days till the Ground which brought forth Thorns and Thiſtles, in the Sweat of his Brows, and in Sorrow ſhould eat of the Herb of the Field all the Days of his Life. To the *Woman* the particular Puniſhment was, that her Sorrow in Conception ſhould be greatly multiplyed, and ſhe ſhould be made ſubject to her Husband who ſhould rule over her.

*The natural Conſequences of inflicting ſuch Puniſhment.*

From this Account of the Nature and Puniſhment of the Sin of our firſt Parents, it is evident that *Part* of the Evil terminated in *themſelves*, and *Part* was derived to their *Poſterity*. That which terminated in themſelves, was the Sin properly ſo called, the actual and perſonal tranſgreſſing of the Law, with the Senſe of Guilt and Dread of Puniſhment which neceſſarily attend it; for theſe are impoſſible to be communicated from one to another. Every Action of an intelligent Being, belongs to that Being and to no other; and the Conſciouſneſs of its being good or evil, depends entirely upon his own Underſtanding, and not upon the Judgment of others. Wherefore there can be no ſuch thing as transferring of Guilt, nor, ſtrictly ſpeaking, of puniſhing one Man for the Sins which were committed by another. But notwithſtanding this, ſo ſtrict is the Relation, and ſuch a mutual Dependance have Men upon each other, with Regard to the Circumſtances of Life and to the preſent temporal good or evil of it; that ſome Perſons may be very great Sufferers on the Account of what others have done: And this is often in Scripture called Puniſhment in a figurative Way of ſpeaking, becauſe it was occaſioned by Sin. And in this Senſe, the Sin of our firſt Parents did not terminate in themſelves, but extended to all their Poſterity; and the whole Race of Mankind were very great Sufferers by it. They were not only deprived of the Pleaſure and Happineſs of the Garden of *Eden*, and forced to provide for themſelves ſuch Neceſſaries and Conveniences, as the common Earth improved by their own Labour and Induſtry would afford them; but had moreover the Tree of Life taken from them: Whence of neceſſity they muſt become ſubject to all the natural Evils and Calamities of humane Life, and to that which is the laſt and moſt terrible of them, *viz.* Death it ſelf.

*This Account agreeable to the natural Notions we have of God.*

This is briefly the Account we have of the Sin of *Adam*, and the Conſequences thereof. And a due Conſideration of it, will afford ſufficient Anſwers to the Objections made againſt it; either with Reſpect to *God* the *Lawgiver*, or to our *firſt Parents* as the *Subjects*, or to their *Poſterity* as *Sharers* in the Evil.

*Firſt*, 'tis objected; * *that as Man is the Workmanſhip of a Being infinitely good and holy, He ſhould not only have been created without any actual Evil, but alſo without any Inclination to Evil: For that Inclination is ſuch a*

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* See the Word *Manichéens* in *Bayle*, *Remark D.* Si l'homme étoit l' ouvrage d'un Principe infiniment bon & ſaint, il auroit eté creé, non ſeulement ſans aucun mal actuel, mais auſſi ſans aucune inclination au mal; puis que cette inclination eſt un defaut qui ne peut pas avoir pour cauſe un tel principe.

*Defect, as could not have ſuch a Principle for its Cauſe.* And further, that as *Freewill* is that Faculty in Men, from whence every moral Evil proceeds; the ſame infinitely good and holy Being † *who foreſaw what an ill Uſe Man would make of his Freewill, inſtead of giving Men Freewill, ſhould have determined them to that which is good, or, if He had given them Freewill, he ſhould always have watched over them to keep them from ſinning.* The *firſt* Part of this Objection is anſwered by *Solomon, Eccleſ.* vii, 29, *God hath made Man upright, but they have ſought out ma-*

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† Car ſi une bonté auſſi bornée que celle des Peres, exige neceſſairement qu'ils previennent autant qu'il leur eſt poſſible le mauvais uſage que leurs enfans pourroient faire des biens qu'ils leur donnent, a plus forte raiſon une bonté infinie & toute-puiſſante previendra-t-elle les mauvais effets de ſes preſens. Au lieu de donner le franc arbitre, elle determinera au bien ſes creatures; ou ſi elle leur donne le franc arbitre, elle veillera toûjours efficacement pour empécher qu'elles ne pechent. *Ibid.*

*ny Inventions.* It is a very unjuſt Reflection on the Creator of the World, to ſay that any thing comes polluted out of his Hands; For as He is in his own Nature infinitely pure and holy, ſo whatever proceeds from Him, muſt be moſt perfect in its Kind. It is ſo far from being true therefore, that Mankind were created with any *actual* Evil, or any *Inclination* to Evil; that juſt the contrary is affirmed of them in Scripture, and is evident from Reaſon, *viz.* that they were made *upright*. If we examine every Power and Faculty of the Mind, every Diſpoſition and Inclination, every Paſſion and Affection, ſeparately; we ſhall find that each of them has its peculiar End and Uſe, has its proper Object; in a regular Application of which, and Gratification by it, it is fully ſatisfied, and anſwers ſome very wiſe and good Purpoſe in Life: And that every Evil, with Regard to theſe, ariſes either from their being placed on wrong Objects, or in an undue Manner, contrary to the original Intention and natural Tendency of them. Wherefore the Fault cannot be charged upon *Them*: They are mere Inſtruments, of good Uſe when rightly applyed, and very miſchievous when miſapplied; but they cannot operate of themſelves: So that their Uſe or Abuſe muſt be referred to the Agent in whoſe ſole Power they are. It is therefore an unjuſt Reflection upon the natural Inclinations and Affections planted originally in Man, to ſay that they are in themſelves ſinful, or do immediately diſpoſe him to Sin, when there is ſuch large Proviſion made for the regular Gratification of them all. The true Cauſe of Complaint, is the Wickedneſs of Mens own Hearts, 2 *Eſd.* iii, 21; *for the firſt Adam bearing a wicked Heart, tranſgreſſed.* Or, as the wiſe Man ſays, 'tis from *the Inventions of Men*, and not from the Nature of Things. It is by the Help of Art, and deſigned Contrivance, that every Paſſion is worked up to ſuch a Heighth, and produces ſuch diſorderly Effects. For we ſee in inferiour Creatures, where *they* are as ſtrong as in Men, there are no ſuch Irregularities, becauſe no ſuch *Inventions.* To the diſtinguiſhing Faculties of Man therefore, are to be aſcribed all the peculiar Evils that He is incident to. It is his Reaſon and Underſtanding which render him liable to be deceived; and 'tis his Freewill, that Principle of voluntary acting, which makes him capable of *doing* what is unreaſonable and unjuſt. With Regard to theſe Faculties 'tis objected, that *upon the Proſpect of the ill Uſe Men would make of Them, a Wiſe and Good Being would rather have determined them always to that which is good*: That is, (if the Words have any Meaning) it is inconſiſtent with the Notion we have of the Goodneſs of God, that He ſhould make any ſuch Creatures at all as Men are, or indeed any finite intelligent and voluntary Agents at all: It will follow, that *Underſtanding* and *Liberty*, conſidering what the natural Conſequences of them are, are no Excellencies and Priviledges at all; but that a mere animal or vegetative Life, or indeed mere inactive Matter, is preferable to them. This, if any Thing, is the Objectors Meaning, or at leaſt unavoidably follows from ſuch Aſſertions.

For upon Suppoſition that it is agreeable to the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God to make a Creature endued with finite Underſtanding and with Liberty, it is agreeable to the ſame Notions that God Almighty (in all his Diſpenſations towards ſuch a Being) ſhould act conſiſtently with thoſe Powers and Faculties that He has given him; Otherwiſe it is the ſame thing as if they were not at all. To ſay therefore that God ought always to *determine* Men to that which is good, is the ſame thing as to ſay that God ſhould have made Men mere *Machines*, and not Men; and that He ſhould have prevented all Poſſibility of Vertue or Goodneſs, as well as have hindred all Sorts of Sin and Vice. For there is no ſuch thing as *determining* Men to Goodneſs. Moral Good or Evil depends entirely ly upon the Suppoſition that Men are able to *determine* themſelves. Take this away, and it overthrows at once all Foundation of Difference betwixt Vertue and Vice, Religion and Irreligion. But *Secondly*; *If* (ſays the Objector) *God has given Men Freewill, He ſhould always watch over them to keep them from ſinning.* How God watches over Men, to keep them from ſinning; muſt be judged of by the common Courſe of his Providence, and the ſeveral ſupernatural Interpoſitions in their Behalf when the other was not ſufficient: And to theſe we muſt appeal, whether God has not all along afforded Men ſufficient Means of Knowledge in their Duty, and ſufficient Motives to induce them to practiſe it: Whether they have any other Temptations or Inclinations to Sin, than ſuch as neceſſarily ariſe from the Conſtitution and Circumſtances of things. And to ſuppoſe any *other Watching* than this; that is, in moral Caſes, to judge of the Means by the Event, and to conceive none ſufficient in themſelves, but what actually obtain the proper Effect; is to take away all Opportunity from free Agents, of exerciſing their Liberty, of being remarkably virtuous or religious, and conſequently of the Capacity of being peculiarly rewarded: Which is, for Men to have the moſt excellent Faculty given them, the moſt noble Talent committed to their Charge, and no Means afforded them of improving it. Beſides, this could not be done but by perpetual Miracles, and, upon every ſlight Occaſion, diſturbing the regular Courſe of things: Which is very unreaſonable to ſuppoſe. For if God has made Mens Duty ſo plain, that if they will apply their Underſtanding to it, they muſt apprehend it ; 'tis altogether as abſurd, when they neglect to uſe their Underſtanding, to expect that a Miracle ſhould be worked to prevent their falling into Sin, as it would be for a Man who has the Uſe of his Eyes, to expect to be miraculouſly hindred from falling down a Precipice, because he ſhuts them and will not ſee. Juſt ſuch a Caſe is put by Mr. *Bayle.* * *How much greater Reaſon,* ſays he, *have we to think, that God who knew all the Thoughts of* Eve, *could not doubt but that ſhe was juſt ready to yeild. He did therefore ſuffer her to ſin; and*

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* See the Word *Paulitiens*, *Remark F.* A plus forte raiſon Dieu qui connoiſſoit toutes les penſées d'Eve, á meſure qu'elles ſe formoient, (les ſociniens ne lui ôtent pas cette connoiſſance) ne pouvoit pas douter qu'elle n'allât ſuccomber. Il a donc voulu la laiſſer pecher; il l'a, dis-je, voulu dans le temps même qu'il pre-

*and this He did at the ſame time, when He foreſaw that ſhe would certainly ſin. The Sin of* Adam *was yet more certainly foreſeen ; for the Example of* Eve *gave ſome Light, the better to foreſee the Fall of her Husband. If God had purpoſed to preſerve Man in his Innocence, and to prevent all the Miſeries which were to be the Conſequence of Sin; would He not at leaſt have fortified the Husband, after the Wife had fallen ? would He not have given Him another Wife ſound and perfect, inſtead of Her that was ſeduced ?* What is all this, but to ſuppoſe that the Underſtandings of

voioit ce peché avec certitude. Le peché d'Adam a été encore plus certainement prevu; car l'exemple d'Eve donnoit des lumieres pour mieux prevoir la chute de ſon mari. Si dieu avoit eu à cœur la conſervation de l'homme, & celle de l'innocence, & l'expulſion de tous les malheurs qui devoient être le ſuite infaillible du peché; n'eût-il pas du moins fortifié le mari, après que la femme fut tombée ? Ne lui eût-il pas donné une autre femme ſaine & entiere, au lieu de celle qui ſ'etoit laiſſé ſeduire.

of our firſt Parents were of no Uſe; and that the Example of the one, could be of no Service for the other to take warning by; and that God Almighty was obliged to hinder them from making Uſe of thoſe Faculties, which he had given them. This was manifeſtly the Caſe of our firſt Parents: For we cannot conceive any more advantageous Circumſtances that they could have been placed in: Their Duty was ſo expreſly commanded, that it was impoſſible for them to be ignorant of it, or to miſunderſtand it: Their Opportunities of committing Sin, were the feweſt, that in the Nature of things could be; and the Temptations were alſo the weakeſt: So that ſuch Sin could proceed only from themſelves, from Careleſsneſs, and from voluntarily miſapplying the Powers and Faculties of their Minds.

Secondly,

*The ſame Account conſiſtent with the divine Præſcience.*

Secondly, Another Part of this Objection relates to the *Knowledge* of God: And this falſely and wickedly charges him with being the Author of Sin, though not *immediately* yet *mediately*, by affirming *that it is altogether as repugnant to the divine* Nature *to produce Creatures who will infallibly ſin, as it is to produce* Sin; *and that, becauſe* He *certainly foreknew that* Men *would ſin, therefore their Sin was neceſſary.* But the Fallacy of this Argument lies in theſe two things. Firſt, in the Ambiguity of the Word *Knowledge.* Strictly and properly ſpeaking, *Knowledge* has Reſpect to the Things in Being, to the ſeveral Properties of them, and the Relation which they bear to each other; And in this Senſe God Almighty is ſaid to know every Thing, becauſe, as He is omnipreſent, there can be no Diſtance ſo great, no Object ſo minute, no Circumſtances ſo perplexed, but he muſt fully comprehend every particular of them. And this is what we mean by *natural Knowledge*, and is the ſame as ſeeing the Truth and Reality of Things. With ſuch Sort of Knowledge as this, 'tis evident, the future Actions of voluntary Agents cannot be known at all; for this plain Reaſon, *viz.* becauſe they have no Exiſtence, but depend upon the mere Wills of free Beings, and therefore are not the Objects of *Science*.

*The Nature and Foundation of Præſcience.*

But there is alſo a *moral* Senſe of the Word *Knowledge*, which regards future Events: The Certainty whereof depends upon a Multitude of Things, the particular Circumſtances of which, as to Time, Perſons, Place and the like, conduce towards effecting the event.

This, in Men, extends no further than *Probability* or *Conjecture.* The Degrees of which, are various; according to their Knowledge of, or Acquaintance with, the State and Condition of Things and Perſons: And in ſome Caſes, where they have a thorough Underſtanding of all the Particulars, they can pronounce with a Certainty almoſt equal to Science. Now if this Sort of Knowledge be univerſally extended, and to an infinite Degree; it will be what we call *Foreknowledge* in *God Almighty.* Which though it be different from that other Attribute of natural Knowledge or Science, as having different Objects, and being exerciſed in a different Manner; yet is it no more poſſible for him to be deceived in the one than in the other. For as God Almighty preſcribes Laws to the whole Creation, animate and inanimate ; He can, with Regard to the inanimate Part of it, tell, for any determined Time to come, what the State of it will be, and how every individual Particle of Matter will at that Moment be conſtituted with Reſpect to every other. And with Regard to the animate and eſpecially to the rational Part, He can alſo tell the Degrees of Knowledge that every Being will be poſſeſſed of, the Tempers and Inclinations of their Minds, the Diſpoſitions and Affections of their Bodies; and He can further tell, what Influence moral Motives have upon free Agents, and how far They will determine themſelves by them; with many other minute Circumſtances and Particulars ; all which put together, become infinitely exact, and is the Foundation of

*Præſcience*, and of foretelling future Events.

*Such Præſcience does not at all affect the Actions of free Beings.*

The *other* Fallacy in the Argument we are now upon, conſiſts in imagining that Foreknowledge is the *Cauſe* of Action, or elſe that it is a *ſufficient Reaſon* for preventing ſuch Action. Neither of which are true. That Knowledge is not the *efficient Cauſe* of Action in any Being, much leſs the Knowledge of One Being the Cauſe of any Action of another, is evident from hence, that Knowledge has no Efficiency; it is no Subſtance, and conſequently can have no impulſive Force or Power. Thus if we could ſuppoſe a Man to know how every Particle of Matter in the Univerſe is moved, this would not alter the Motion of any of them. Or if He could know certainly which Way any other Man would determine himſelf in any Action, this Knowledge alone would neither affect that Perſon's Liberty, nor alter any other Circumſtance. Since therefore Events are not determined by Foreknowledge, but the Freedom of Action remains juſt the ſame with or without it; this entirely vindicates the divine Goodneſs from being the Cauſe of Sin, and ſhows that it ariſes wholly from the Agent himſelf. Nothing therefore can be more abſurd than that Aſſertion of Mr. *Bayle*, * *That by the Rules of Philoſophy it may be maintained, that if it be repugnant to the Nature of God to produce Sin, it is repugnant to the ſame Nature to produce Creatures who will infallibly produce Sin under thoſe Circumſtances in which He choſe to place them; For according*

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* Pendant qu'il voudra Philoſopher, on lui ſoutiendra &c. *Entretiens de Maxime & de Themiſte*. p. 142.

*to our moſt diſtinct Ideas, it is altogether the ſame thing to commit Murder ones ſelf, as to put a Man into ſuch Circumſtances in which we certainly know He will be killed.* The Fallacy of this Argument (beſides that the Inſtance is nothing to the Purpoſe, God having an abſolute Right over the Lives of all his Creatures, which Men have not over each other; and there may be Caſes put, where even with Reſpect to Men it will not hold;) the Fallacy I ſay lies here, that He ſuppoſes from the Event, that God Almighty deſigns to ſeduce Men into Sin, and therefore places them in the moſt diſadvantageous Circumſtances poſſible in Order to tempt them to it: Whereas from the State of Mankind it is evident on the other Hand, that God Almighty's Deſign is, that they ſhould not ſin, and therefore He does all that is conſiſtent with his Perfections and their Faculties to prevent it; but they by their own voluntary Abuſe fruſtrate this Intention, as ſhall be afterwards made more particularly to appear.

*Præſcience no juſt Reaſon for over-ruling the Faculties of free Beings.*

And as to the remaining Part of this Objection, that if Foreknowledge be not the *Cauſe* of Sin, yet it ought to be a Reaſon for a Good and Powerful Governour to *prevent* it; This alſo is built on a wrong Foundation. Every Attribute of the Deity has its proper Object: And our conceiving *that* to be the Object of one Attribute which belongs to another, oftentimes cauſes great Confuſion, and is attended with great Abſurdities. And This is the Caſe here. The right Application of Foreknowledge does not conſiſt in hindring the Events (which cannot be done but by deſtroying the Subjects) but in doing all that is fit and proper to be done, conſiſtent with the Faculties of the Agent and with the other Attributes of the Deity, to induce a free Agent in a moral Way, to determine himſelf to do what is right and juſt. Laſtly;

*Of the Infection of Sin.*

All that remains upon this Head, is what our Objector calls the *Infection* of Sin; particularly that of our firſt Parents: That it produced all imaginable Crimes over the Face of the whole Earth, and, in Conſequence of them, all Manner of Evils. But we find no ſuch Repreſentation as this, in Scripture; It is there ſaid expreſly, *That the Son ſhall not be puniſhed for the Iniquity of the Father*: And therefore whatever Evils befal the Children, which the Parents might be the *Occaſion* of, they are but improperly called Puniſhments,

Ezekiel XVIII. 20.

niſhments, and are ſuch only as might have juſtly come upon them in the common Courſe of Things, tho' their Parents had not ſinned: So that, as our Saviour ſays,
Luke XIII. 7. *we ought not to eſteem them as Sinners upon that Account.* The *Infection* of Sin, is chiefly the Example, Authority, or Perſuaſion of *Others*: The *immediate Cauſe* muſt be from Mens *ſelves.* So that though Some may be great Sufferers by Occaſion of *Others*; yet ſo long as they are not conſcious of any perſonal Guilt, they cannot think thoſe Evils to be truly Puniſhments, or the Effects of the Diſpleaſure of a juſt and righteous Governour. According to that of St *Paul*;
1 Cor. XV. 5, 6. *The Sting of Death is Sin.* The looking upon Death as a Puniſhment inflicted upon us for our actual Sin, is that which makes it terrible. It

would have another Appearance to an innocent Perſon, who would look upon it only as one of the * natural Effects of the preſent State of Things. And thus the Effects of the firſt Sin are explained by St *Paul* : *In Adam*, or *by Adam, all died* ; all the Sons of *Adam* are mortal Men. Which Evil, his Tranſgreſſion was the Occaſion of. But as They have no Right to live for ever, God Almighty might, if He had pleaſed, have put them originally in the ſame State, and never given them the Tree of Life at all ; and there would have been no Injuſtice done to them. But this Subjection to Death, when conſidered as a Puniſhment, is a Puniſhment for their own Sins, and not for the Sins of their firſt Parents ; *Rom.* V. 12. *Wherefore as by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin,*

*and*

* Ea lege nati ſumus. *Cic.*

*and ſo Death paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned.* The ſame Puniſhment may be inflicted for different Sorts of Sins. And thus Death is made the general Puniſhment for Mens Tranſgreſſions here, whatever the particular Nature of them be. And therefore *Death reigned from Adam to Moſes over them that had not ſinned after the Similitude of Adams Tranſgreſſion,* ver. 14. *Adam*'s Sin conſiſted in tranſgreſſing a poſitive Law of God: But there was no poſitive Law eſtabliſhed from the Days of *Adam* to the Days of *Moſes*: Wherefore Men could only, during that Time, tranſgreſs the Laws of Nature and Reaſon, that is, act contrary to the Senſe of their own Minds; and for this, they were continued ſubject unto Death. This is all the Effect that the Scripture mentions of the Sin of our firſt Parents. And whatever Other Conſequences may be drawn from thence, do not affect us as Chriſtians, nor relate to our eternal Salvation. *Faith and Repentance* are the only Condition of the Goſpel: Whence 'tis evident that the Sins to which Pardon is on theſe Conditions annexed, are Perſonal: For as no Man can *ſin*, ſo no Man can *repent* for *Another*.

*The State of Mankind as repreſented in the Goſpel.*

But for a further Explication of this, let us conſider the preſent State of Mankind according to the Goſpel Account of it, in Order to ſee what Proviſion is there made to prevent Sin, whence it is that the Goſpel produces not the deſigned Effect, and what is reaſonably to be expected afterwards. The Foundation of the Goſpel is laid in this, that all Men are Sinners; it ſuppoſes that every Perſon has in ſome Inſtances failed of performing his Duty; according to that of our Saviour, *they that are* Matt. IX. 12, 13. *whole need not a Phyſician, but they that are ſick; I came not to call the righteous, but Sinners to* Rom. III. 23. *Repentance*; and St. *Paul* agreeably hereto, *for all have ſinned and come ſhort of the glory of God.* For the Truth of this, the Apoſtles appealed to every Man's own Reaſon and Judgment, whether he was not conſcious of having offended in many things; the Guilt of which raiſed in him a juſt Dread of Puniſhment from that Supreme Being, whoſe Laws he had tranſgreſſed. And that this was the Caſe of all Mankind in every paſt Age, appeared not only from the Confeſſion of the wiſeſt and beſt amongſt them, but from the general Practiſe of the whole World in their Sacrifices and other religious Rites; whereby they ſignifyed the Senſe they had of their own Guilt, and endeavoured to make Atonement for what they had done amiſs. This being confeſſedly the State of Mankind; both of Thoſe who had no other Light or Aſſiſtance beſides what their own Reaſon and Conſcience ſuggeſted to them, (for theſe *knew* Rom. I. 32. *the Judgment of God, that they which commit ſuch things were worthy of Death*;) and alſo of Thoſe who had ſupernatural Revelations made to them; the Deſign of which Revelations was to reinforce their Duty, and to ſhow them the Condemnation they were under: This I ſay, being confeſſedly their State, the great Query was, as St *Paul* ſays, *Rom.* vii, 24, *who ſhould deliver them from the Body of this Death?* Now in order to a full Anſwer to this, it was neceſſary not only to deſcribe the State Mankind were in, but alſo to ſhow by *what Means* they came to be ſo wicked and miſerable; Which our Saviour himſelf does in general, *Mat.* xiii. 14, 15, from the Prophet *Iſaiah*; *By hearing ye ſhall hear, and ſhall not underſtand, and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee, and ſhall not perceive; for this Peoples Heart is waxed groſs, and their Ears are dull of hearing, and their Eyes they have cloſed, leſt at any time they ſhould ſee with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and underſtand with their Heart, and ſhould be converted and I ſhould heal them.* Where it is evident, that God has given Men Powers and Faculties of *Body* and *Mind*, in Order to find out and practiſe their Duty; and that, if they did but rightly make Uſe of theſe Faculties, they could not poſſibly fail in either reſpect. Wherefore their Corruption and Degeneracy, was owing to themſelves ; They voluntarily neglected and deſpiſed the Means of Knowledge, and obſtinately abuſed and perverted their natural Abilities. The neceſſary Conſequence of which, is Ignorance and Vice. But St *Paul* is more particular in explaining the Method of Providence, and vindicating the Goodneſs and Wiſdom of God's Dealings with Men; in his *Epiſt.* to the *Rom.* Where He diſtinguiſhes Mankind into two Sorts; thoſe that were ſubject to the Law of Nature only, and thoſe that had moreover a ſupernatural Revelation made to them; And he ſhows whence it is, that each of theſe failed of obtaining that Effect which it was reaſonable to expect from them.

*The Light of Nature ſufficient to teach Men their Duty.*

With reſpect to thoſe who had only the Law of Nature to direct themſelves by, He ſays, *ch.* I. 19, 20; that *That which may be known of God, is manifeſt in them; for God hath ſhewed it unto them: For the inviſible things of him from the creation of the World are clearly ſeen, being underſtood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead; ſo that they are without excuſe: Becauſe that when they knew God, they glorifyed him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkned.* There cannot be a plainer nor more exact Account given of this Matter, than the Apoſtle here gives us. God is in his own Nature inviſible, *no Man hath ſeen or can ſee him*; He is alſo infinite and immenſe, and therefore cannot fully be comprehended by finite Beings: But ſomething

John I. 18.

we can underſtand of him; And in order to true Religion or a right Worſhip of him, 'tis abſolutely neceſſary that Men ſhould have ſome Knowledge of him; Otherwiſe, as our Saviour ſays, *they would worſhip they know not what*. Now John IV. 22. That which Men are able to apprehend concerning him (which is ſufficient for all the Purpoſes of Religion) he has manifeſted in the moſt plain and viſible Manner poſſible to every Capacity, *viz.* in the Works of the Creation. Theſe are a plain Demonſtration of the Power and Goodneſs of God, and of the Duty which Men owe to him upon that Account. For He who takes never ſo ſlight a View of the Order and Beauty of Nature, or who conſiders never ſo little what has paſſed with reſpect to Himſelf; who conſiders, not only the Benefit of his *Being*, but the perpetual *Preſervation*, and the innumerable *Conveniencies* of Life; cannot help ſeeing that *theſe* are the Effect of infinite Power and Wiſdom and Goodneſs, and conſequently that there muſt be a Being in whom theſe Perfections reſide; and that This Being ought, not only to be acknowledged, but alſo to be obeyed with the utmoſt Thankfulneſs and Gratitude. Theſe Things, I ſay, are ſo obvious, that they cannot poſſibly eſcape the Notice of the meaneſt Underſtanding, with the leaſt Attention; any more than it is poſſible for a Man, when he ſees the moſt beautiful Building, to imagine that it was made without any Hands and contrived without any Art; or when he hears the moſt harmonious Sound, to conclude that it is effected without any Cauſe or without any Skill. Mankind are therefore without Excuſe; they cannot plead Ignorance of their Duty; it is as evident to their Underſtandings, as Light is to their Eyes. The Cauſe of all their Iniquity therefore was from themſelves, either by a *voluntary* not attending to the Means of Knowledge, which by Degrees became habitual Negligence; or elſe *obſtinately* abuſing thoſe Means, at the ſame Time that they were conſcious of the Truth. The neceſſary Conſequence of which, was, that Paſſion taking the Place of Reaſon, and Men being wholly guided by it, they muſt run into the higheſt Extravagance here mentioned by the Apoſtle; *viz.* worſhipping the loweſt Part of the Creation, inſtead of him that made the Whole. And the Caſe of ſuch Perſons is the ſame with Regard to Morality and the Faculties of their Minds, as it would be with Reſpect to natural things and the Powers of the Body, if Men ſhould neglect to uſe their Eyes or other Senſes, (which would be attended with the utmoſt Confuſion,) and then plead for themſelves that they were not ſufficient for the Purpoſes of Life.

*The ſame further promoted by Revelation.*

This is the Scripture-Repreſentation of the State Mankind in general reduced themſelves to, when they were ſubject to the Law of Reaſon only. And not much different, was the Caſe of thoſe who had moreover a ſupernatural Law given them. This Law, as the ſame Apoſtle ſays, *Rom.* VII. 12, *was holy, juſt and good*; and ſo likewiſe was the End of appointing it, *viz.* that Men might reap the Benefit of it by conforming their Actions to it. But all that any Law can do, being no more than to lay before

Men the Particulars of their Duty, and to inforce them with Promiſes and Threats; theſe having no natural Efficiency in them to compel Men to act, They may through Negligence forbear conſidering the Nature of its Precepts, or through Obſtinacy reſiſt its Motives. And ſo, of Conſequence, That which was originally deſigned, and in its own Nature tended to promote true Religion and Vertue; may be unto them, by their own Fault, an Occaſion of falling. Thus the *ſupernatural* Means of religious Knowledge were abuſed by the *Jews*, as the *natural* Means were by the *Gentiles*; And ſo the whole World, as St *John* expreſſes it, *lyeth in Evil*, were guilty of Sin, and liable to the Conſequences of it. This was the Condition of Mankind at the Time when the Goſpel was eſtabliſhed. God Almighty had done all for them that infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs could do, conſiſtently with their Circumſtances, to prevent them from ſinning; but they had fruſtrated his Intentions: After which, nothing remained but the executing of Juſtice or the ſhowing of Mercy. They had forfeited all Title to Life and Happineſs by voluntarily tranſgreſſing the Law, and were moreover ſubject to the Condemnation of it; Wherefore they were for the future wholly at the good Pleaſure of God to do with them as He ſaw fit, either to inflict the Puniſhment threatned, or to propoſe to them Terms of Pardon and Acceptance. His infinite Pity and Compaſſion prompted him to the latter; as even our *natural* Knowledge of the Attributes of God, teaches us to hope. And accordingly, after due Preparation; when the Circumſtances and Condition of Mankind were moſt fitted for it, the Prophecies of the Jews being compleated, and the Expectation of the Gentiles greatly raiſed; he ſent a *Perſon* into the World to declare that he *would* accept of the Repentance of Sinners, and would reward their future Obedience. This *Perſon* was the ſame that was foretold by the Law and the Prophets to the Jews, under the Titles of the *Meſſiah*, or *Chriſt*, the *Son of God*, the *King of Iſrael*, and the like: And the Teſtimony He gave of himſelf was, the working of greater Miracles than *Moſes* or any other Prophet. To the Gentiles, who were Strangers to theſe Characters, He appeared by the ſame Teſtimony, to be a Man approved of God, and ordained to declare his Will to them;

according to theſe Words, *Acts* xiii, 47, *I have ſet thee to be a Light to the Gentiles, and that thou ſhouldſt be for Salvation to the Ends of the Earth.* The Deſign of his Miſſion is fully and clearly expreſſed by St *Paul* in his Diſcourſe to the *Athenians*, Acts xvii ; 30, 31, *God that made the World and all things therein, ſeeing that He is Lord of Heaven and Earth, winked at the Times of paſt Ignorance, but now commandeth all Men every where to repent, becauſe He hath appointed a day in which he will judge the World in righteouſneſs, by that Man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all Men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead.* This ſhort Account gives us a true Notion of the Chriſtian Religion; and ſhows us the Agreeableneſs of it to the natural Apprehenſion Men have of God, before they have corrupted themſelves. How far the *Athenians* were ſunk into Superſtition and Idolatry (who were yet the moſt learned and polite Part of *Greece*,) the Inſtance here given evidently ſhows. It was neceſſary therefore in order to their Reformation, to give them a right Notion of God; that He is That living, intelligent and beneficent Being, who made the Heavens and the Earth, and the Sea, and all Things rational, animate, and inanimate, that are therein; that He not only originally formed them, but alſo is Lord over them, Governour of them, and regulates them by the ſeveral Laws which their reſpective Natures and Circumſtances render them ſubject to. Wherefore as Men are made reaſonable Creatures, capable of giving an Account of their Actions, and conſequently of being rewarded or puniſhed for what they do; God Almighty now declares to the whole World, that He will overlook and paſs by thoſe things that proceeded from Mens former Ignorance; but for the future, he commands them All every where to repent, becauſe, as He is Governour of the World, he will certainly judge it: In order to which Judgement, He has appointed a *Perſon*, even Jeſus Chriſt, to whom He has committed all Power of judging; and He has ſet apart a particular *Time* when it ſhall be executed, and every Man ſhall receive his Sentence according to the unerring and eternal Rule of Righteouſneſs. And, as the fulleſt and moſt compleat Aſſurance hereof, He has raiſed this very Perſon from the dead, after he had been maliciouſly ſlain by the Jews. Theſe are the fundamental Principles of the Goſpel; and under theſe Views and with theſe Expectations is every Chriſtian to direct his Life and Converſation. If He throughly examines the Nature and Conſequences of them, He will immediately ſee the Folly and Abſurdity of all Idolatry and falſe Worſhip under every Diſpenſation of Religion, and will be led to the true Worſhip of the true God in that Method which He himſelf has appointed. Every one of theſe Particulars are enlarged, explained, and illuſtrated throughout the whole New Teſtament, by Variety of different Expreſſions, Similitudes, and the like, according to the different Capacities and Cuſtoms of thoſe Perſons to whom they were delivered; That they who do not apprehend them in one View, may more clearly ſee them in another; for they all manifeſtly tend to the ſame Thing.

*Of the Power of the Devil.*

Having thus briefly ſeen the Nature and End of the Goſpel-Inſtitution, and how admirably well it is ſuited to obtain the Effect propoſed by it; I come now to examine particularly the Objections that have been made againſt it. And the firſt is, the Repreſentation which is there made of the Power and Dominion of the *Devil*; which is ſo great and univerſal over all Mankind, as may ſeem to favour the *Manichæan* Notion of an infinitely evil Principle. I have before demonſtrated that it is abſolutely impoſſible that an infinitely evil Principle ſhould exiſt at all; And therefore if the Devil were repreſented in Scripture as a very exalted Being, yet ſince He cannot but be dependent, and owe both his Exiſtence and Continuance to the Will of the Supreme, it is evident that He can do nothing but by Permiſſion; And ſuch Permiſſion muſt be for ſome general wiſe and good End; And, were He never ſo potent, yet, becauſe He is limited, there is no Proportion between His Power and the Power of God, who can deſtroy him and blaſt his Deſigns in a Moment. And therefore the thing muſt be underſtood in *This* Latitude at leaſt. But the Scripture does not repreſent him even *thus* great, but only as the Head and Leader of the rebellious Angels, who were caſt out of the Preſence of God, becauſe, as St *Jude* ſays, *ver.* 6, *They kept not themſelves within their proper Bounds, but left their own habitation, and are reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs, unto the Judgment of*

*the great day.* Now the Angels,
Pſalm as the Royal Pſalmiſt ſays, are but
VIII. 5. a little ſuperiour to Men: And
therefore to make any Compariſon
between any even of the higheſt
order of them, and God Almighty
who is ſupreme over all, is to ſet
the Creature upon the Level with
the Creator, and to equal Finite
with Infinite. It is very true indeed,
that the Devil is called the
2 Cor. *God of this World*, the *Prince*
IV. 4. *of the Power of the Air*; and the
Epheſ. whole World is ſaid to be *his*, and
II. 2. Mat. IV. every thing in it *at his diſpoſal.*
9. Whence Mankind are repreſented
as his Subjects and Children,
in whoſe Minds He works
to produce Diſobedience, and before
whoſe Eyes He lays perpetual
Snares and Temptations to ſeduce
them, and over whoſe Bodies
he has ſuch Influence as to inflict
the ſeveral Diſeaſes and Calamities

lamities

limities they are incident to. Learned Men have very much perplexed themſelves how to account for this extenſive Dominion of Satan, and have invented various Hypotheſes in order to ſolve the Difficulties objected. But it is the ſame with theſe Hypotheſes, as with thoſe by which the antient Philoſophers attempted to explain the Phœnomena of the natural World. They are wholly beſide the Purpoſe: And whichſoever of them be true, or whether any of them be ſo, is all one as to the Scripture-Account and Deſign. For 'tis manifeſt, all that is intended in Scripture, is only to repreſent That State of Sin and Guilt Mankind are in; and to let them know what is required of them for the future, in order to their Recovery out of it. Wherefore 'tis the plain and viſible Effects only, and the Degree and Univerſality of them, that are there laid down; and not the natural Cauſes of them, or the philoſophical Reaſons enquired into. Wherefore the ſame Effect is aſcribed to different Cauſes, according to the various Opinions of Men at That time; and illuſtrated and explained by different Similitudes, that Perſons of all Capacities might in one View or other apprehend and apply it. And that this is ſo, appears from hence; that when either our Saviour or his Apoſtles ſpeak in plain Words, without any Figure or Metaphor, they then deſcribe ſuch Effects only in the moſt intelligible Manner. Theſe Places therefore we ought to lay the whole Streſs upon, which are ſo obvious that no Man ever did or can miſunderſtand them: And we ought to explain the difficult ones by theſe, and not theſe by the difficult ones. Thus, in the Inſtance before us, when our Saviour told the Jews (who boaſted that they were the Children of God and of the Patriarchs,) that on the contrary they were indeed the Children of the Devil; he immediately explains himſelf, *John* VIII. 44, *Ye are of your father the Devil, and the luſts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, becauſe there is no truth in him. When he ſpeaketh a lie, he ſpeaketh of his own: for he is a lyar, and the father of it.* Here the Jews are reproached as having the Devil for their Father, becauſe they imitated him, as Children for the moſt Part do their Parents, in thoſe Particulars which he was moſt remarkably guilty of, *viz.* Murder, and Lying. And thus likewiſe

St *John* is full and expreſs, and introduces his Words with a Caution to us not to be impoſed upon in a Matter of ſo great Concern by any other Repreſentation, 1 *Joh.* iii. 7, 8, *Little Children, let no man deceive you: He that doth righteouſneſs, is righteous, even as he is righteous: He that committeth Sin, is of the Devil, for the Devil ſinneth from the beginning.*— 10, *in this the Children of God* are manifeſt, *and the Children of the Devil: Whoſoever doth not righteouſneſs, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.* Nothing can be more evident, than that the Apoſtle here makes the Principle of every *vertuous* and of every ſinful Action, to be from within every Man's ſelf. 'Tis the *Acting* only, that is worthy of Praiſe or Blame, and which denominates a Man *juſt* or *unjuſt*. If any Man *commits* a Sin, whatever the Cauſe, Occaſion or Motive be, He is of the Devil. This is fundamental to the Chriſtian Religion; And it is by this Rule only, that Chriſtians are to diſtinguiſh the Children of God from the Children of the Devil; and in this they cannot poſſibly be miſtaken. And that we ought to interpret Scripture in this Manner, our Saviour himſelf gives us an Example, *Matt.* ix, *ver.* 5; The Jews brought to him a Man ſick of the Palſie, that he might heal him: As ſoon as he came near, Chriſt ſaid unto him, *Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins be forgiven thee.* This Expreſſion the Jews were ſurpriſed at, becauſe they thought it Blaſphemy. On the other hand, they imagined that every Diſtemper was inflicted as a Puniſhment for ſome Sin. Which our Saviour very well knowing, ſaid to them, *Which is eaſier to ſay, thy Sins be forgiven thee, or to ſay, riſe and walk?* That is, the ſame thing being meant by two different Expreſſions, it was all one whether the literal or metaphorical Phraſe was made uſe of. And in many other Places, He always avoids the Inquiry into the natural or metaphyſical Cauſes of Things, (as in the Caſe of the Man that was born blind, and of the eighteen Perſons upon whom the Tower in *Siloam* fell;) and bids Men apply the external Facts only to themſelves, and make a right Uſe of them for their Improvement. And the ſame may be ſaid concerning that Power which we find ſo often aſcribed to the Devil, over the Bodies of Men, to inflict ſeveral Diſeaſes; particularly what is called *Poſſeſſion.* The Teſtimony our Saviour gave of his

Power and Authority, was the working of Miracles; ſuch Miracles as the meaneſt Underſtanding muſt know were contrary to the common Courſe of things, and ſuperiour to any Power on Earth; and conſequently, as *Nicodemus* rightly argued, *no man could do ſuch things, except God were with him.* John III. 2. The Principal of theſe, was the curing all Sorts of Diſeaſes, of how long Continuance, and of how great Malignity ſo ever. Now this Power was equally evidenced, whatever the Phyſical Cauſe of theſe Diſtempers were. So that it is not material, as to the religious Uſes to be made of them, what Cauſe they are aſcribed to. It may be an Errour in natural Philoſophy, but the Truth of Religion is not at all affected by it. And hence it is that the Writers of the New Teſtament, though they perfectly agree in every thing that is eſſential to Religion, yet they are not ſo very nice and exact in the remote Circumſtances of their Relations. And therefore a Fact is ſometimes repreſented in different Expreſſions, according to the Notions of the Perſons to whom it was delivered, or the different Views of Them that related it. Thus in the XVIIth of St *Matthew*, 14: The Man who applies to our Saviour to heal his Son, in his Deſcription of the Diſeaſe, uſes ſeveral Expreſſions, ſignifying the ſame thing; as that he was *lunatick*, that he was *ſore vexed*, or, as it is in the original, κακῶς ϖάσχει, *he ſuffered grievouſly*. And in the curing of him, it is ſaid at the 18*th v.* that Jeſus *rebuked the Devil, and he departed out of him*. From which Account it is evident, that ſome of theſe Expreſſions muſt be metaphorical, becauſe the ſame Effect is aſcribed to different Cauſes. So that it is moſt probable that theſe Denominations were given, from different Conſiderations of the ſame Diſeaſe; as That of *Lunacy*, from the periodical Revolution of it; That of *evil Suffering*, from the Effect; and That of *Poſſeſſion*, from the reputed Cauſe. And if every one of theſe be included, the true Inference to be drawn is this, that Chriſt who by the Word of his Mouth, healed the Perſon thus affected, was ſuperiour to all theſe Cauſes ſeparately or joyntly; And therefore He was to be acknowledged as having all Power over the Devil, and over the Laws of Nature, ſo as in every thing to make them yield to him. According to that Similitude of our Saviour's, *Matt.* xii. 29. *How can one enter into a ſtrong mans houſe and ſpoil his goods; except he firſt bind the ſtrong man? and then he may ſpoil his Houſe.* His caſting out Devils therefore was a Demonſtration, that however extenſive the Dominion of Satan was, it could not ſtand before Him who came to eſtabliſh a Kingdom directly oppoſite to it. Accordingly he ſays in another Place, *Luke* x. 18, when his Diſciples told him that even the Devils were ſubject unto them through his Name; *I beheld Satan as Lightning fall from Heaven.* It is therefore great Weakneſs in Mr *Bayle*, to conclude from thoſe Expreſſions in Scripture, which were intended only to ſhow the univerſal Prevalence of Sin, and the Strength of the Goſpel-Motives in overcoming it; 'tis great Weakneſs, I ſay, to conclude from hence, that the natural Power of the Devil is very near equal to that of the Son of God; when it is expreſly ſaid, that there is no Compariſon; but upon Chriſt's exerting his Power, the Devil fled as quick before him, as the Lightning moves from one Part of the Heavens to another.

*Of Temptations to Sin.*

And altogether as weak, is that other Objection concerning the Univerſality and Force of thoſe Temptations, by which Men are ſeduced into Sin; As if God Almighty laid them in their Way, as ſo many Snares, on Purpoſe to entangle them, and then afterwards puniſh them for what they were thus deceived into. As this Repreſentation is directly contrary to the natural Notions we have of God from what we obſerve here of the general Courſe of his

Providence, ſo is it alſo contrary to the plain and expreſs Words of Scripture; in which we have as clear an Account of the Nature of ſuch Temptations, and the particular Manner how they operate on Men, agreeably to every one's own Experience; as is poſſible to be given. From thoſe Places of Scripture therefore, which are free of all Metaphors, and where the Terms are common and obvious to every Capacity; we ought to form our Notions, concerning the Truth and Reality of ſuch Temptations: And from Theſe ought we to explain the other and more difficult Places, which are either figurative, or regard ſome particular Cuſtoms or generally received Notions, which to us at this Diſtance of time may ſeem very ſurpriſing. And thus St *James* directly anſwers this Objection, in the 1*ſt ch.* of his Epiſtle, *v.* 13, 14, 15; *Let no man ſay, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed. Then when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin when it is finiſhed, bringeth forth death.* Here the Apoſtle firſt vindicates God Almighty from having any hand in ſeducing Men into Sin, and then ſhows whence it is that they are drawn into the Commiſſion of it. God is of a Nature infinitely pure and holy, ſo that no Evils of any kind can at all influence or affect him; he cannot be in the leaſt ſtained or polluted by them: It is therefore abſolutely impoſſible that he ſhould either will or intend, much leſs actually do any thing in order to bring Men into Sin; for this would argue ſome Degree of Evil in him: But every Temptation is from a Man's own ſelf. When either thro' Negligence, or with Deſign, he permits thoſe Deſires and Paſſions, which, when exerciſed upon their proper Objects and in a due Manner, are of excellent Uſe and Advantage to him, to exceed their juſt Bounds and to drown his Reaſon and Judgment; then is he drawn into a Snare by them; and in ſubmitting to their Suggeſtions, Sin is produced, which is attended with Death as the juſt Conſequence of its Demerit. So that every Sin is a Man's own Act; and ariſes from, and is finiſhed within himſelf. Agreeable to which is that of St *Paul*, 1 *Cor*. x. 13; *There hath no Temptation taken you, but ſuch as is common to man: but God is faith-*

*ful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that ye may be able to bear it.* Here this Apoſtle affirms of Temptations, that they ariſe from the preſent Circumſtances and Condition of humane Nature, and are no more than naturally reſult from the Diſpoſitions of Mens Minds, the Texture of their Bodies, and the Conſtitution of Things without: All which are ſo immediately under the Direction of Almighty God, that He does moſt exactly adjuſt and proportion every one of them. So that it is through every Man's own Fault, if He is at any time impoſed upon by them. This is a very familiar and natural Account of the Temptations incident to Mankind, and of the Manner how Men are affected by them;

and 'tis exactly agreeable to what we every day obſerve of them. In other Reſpects, and according to vulgar Acceptation, the ſame things may alſo be expreſſed differently: Which yet ought not by any Means to be ſuppoſed inconſiſtent with what is thus plainly and explicitly declared. Thus with Regard to the *Event*, or from the bare Conſideration of the *Effect* of theſe Temptations, and the univerſal Prevalency of them; which is to be judged of by Mens Actions or Compliance with them, they are called *Snares* and *Baits*; and are ſaid to *allure*, *deceive* and *draw* Men into Sin. Which Words are not to be underſtood literally, but metaphorically, as ſignifying the *Effect* only, and not the immediate Cauſe or Intention; and therefore muſt be interpreted in a moral or ſpiritual

Senſe. And it is altogether as abſurd to ſuppoſe ſuch Temptations to be in themſelves *evil*, or to have any natural Efficiency upon Men to cauſe them to Sin; as it was in the Jews to accuſe the Law of God as being ſinful, becauſe, if there had been no Law, there could have been no Tranſgreſſion. For tho' by the Law was the *Knowledge* of Sin, and it was alſo the Occaſion of Mens committing Sin; yet, as St *Paul* there argues, *the Law was holy, and the Commandment holy, juſt and good*, Rom. vii. 12. The ſame may here be ſaid of *Temptations*, or of all thoſe things which are the Occaſion of Mens Sins; which St *John* comprehends under theſe three, Pleaſure, Riches, and Honour, 1 *Joh.* ii. 16. *For all that is in the World, the luſt of the fleſh, and the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of Life, is not* *of the Father, but is of the World.* One or other of theſe, is the Foundation of every Sin that is committed. But every one of them is in it ſelf good, and appointed for a wiſe and good End; and they receive the Denomination of evil, only from the Exceſs or Abuſe of them. They are like all other *Means* or *Inſtruments*, entirely in the Power and at the Diſpoſal of the Workman. He may wholly neglect them, and they will of themſelves decay and come to nothing; or He may apply them to a wrong Uſe, and then they will be injurious to himſelf and others. Neither of which, caſts any Reflection upon the Author of theſe Means, nor upon the Means themſelves; but the Blame lies wholly upon Him, who thus voluntarily abuſes the Talents committed to him, and fruſtrates the Intention of his Lord. So likewiſe with Reſpect to the *Cauſe* of ſuch Temptations: As all Sin is ſuppoſed in Scripture to be from the Devil, ſo when ever any Number of natural Cauſes conſpire to produce any very remarkable ill Effect upon Men, eſpecially upon good and vertuous Perſons, or any Set of Circumſtances happen ſo advantageous on the ſide of Sin as to lead them into the Commiſſion of ſome great Offence; this is generally aſcribed to the *Devil*; as if the natural Laws of the Creation were at his Diſpoſal, or, at leaſt, as if he had a Power to interpoſe and diſturb the general Order and Harmony of them. But as it is not the Buſineſs of Religion to give a philoſophical Account of natural things; it amounts to the ſame thing *whatever* Hypotheſis be true in *This particular* alſo;

Whether theſe Repreſentations be only figurative, or whether they be literally true. For as God himſelf is the Supreme Governour of the World, nothing can be done but by his Permiſſion and Conſent. And as He hath ſubjected the whole Creation to ſuch and ſuch Laws, which are liable to Interruption, and, under ſome Circumſtances, to produce very ill Effects upon Men; and as He intended theſe Effects ſhould come upon them for their Correction and Advantage, if it be not their own Fault; ſo it is all one, whether they come to paſs by the natural Courſe of things, or by the Interpoſition of any wicked Agent, who, though his Intention be evil, yet is only a mere Inſtrument and can go no further than He is allowed. And ſo we find this Matter repreſented in the

Book of *Job.* The Deſign of all thoſe Afflictions and Evils which That good Man ſuffered, was to render his Vertue the more conſpicuous, and to make him capable of the greater Reward; and it is ſaid that Satan was the Executioner of them all; yet when the Particulars are enumerated, the immediate Cauſes are ſuch as might have come to paſs by the general Laws of Nature. Thus the Robbers killed ſome of his Servants, and carried away his Cattle; a Storm of Lightning deſtroyed a great many others; a Hurricane of Wind blew down the Houſe, and killed his Children; and a violent Diſeaſe ſeized himſelf. Now whatſoever was the real phyſical Cauſe of all theſe things; the Providence of God, and the Patience of *Job*, which are the only things intended to be manifeſted, are equally obvious. Job I *and* II.

*The moral Impoſſibility of preventing Sin.*

Having thus examined the Nature and Original of Sin, and ſhown that it ariſes from a Principle within every Man's Self, which Principle was given him for a very different Purpoſe, *viz.* to make him capable of Vertue and Happineſs: We may now apply what our Saviour ſays to his Diſciples concerning thoſe Offences relating to the Goſpel, to all Sins in general: *Luke* xvii, 2, *It is impoſſible but that Offences will come, but woe unto Him through whom they come*; That is, morally ſpeaking, it cannot be but Men will commit Sin, though God Almighty has done all that was fit for infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs to do to prevent it; becauſe it depends wholly upon the Liberty of the Agent, which cannot be conſtrained without being deſtroyed; and therefore the ſtrongeſt and moſt powerful Motives may be reſiſted; and Inſtances of Perſons that do actually reſiſt ſuch Motives, there always were and always will be: But woe be unto them in ſo doing; it *were better that a Millſtone were hanged about their Necks, and they were caſt in to the Sea.* That is; As the Fault is wholly within themſelves, there being no Evil originally in the Temper of their Minds or Conſtitution of their Bodies, no Want of Knowledge or Inſtruction from the Diſpenſations of Providence; ſo all the Conſequences of Sin, every Evil that attends it, muſt be aſcribed to themſelves. Which is the next thing we are to conſider.

*Of the Conſequences of Sin.*

Though not only the original Being, but the continual Preſervation of Mankind, is wholly owing to the Goodneſs and Loving-kindneſs of God; and He might deprive them of that Being and Happineſs which were his own free Gifts, whenever He pleaſed; yet there was no Reaſon to apprehend his doing it, ſo long as Men continued to obſerve his Laws, and to promote the Ends of their Creation. But after the voluntary Commiſſion of Sin, contrary to the Judgement of their own Minds, and the known Laws of God; Men could not but be uneaſy from the Conſciouſneſs of their own Guilt, and the Expectation of what was to come. They had by this Means forfeited all Right to the Favour and Protection of God, and were become obnoxious to the Sentence of the Law, that is *Death*, conſidered as the Puniſhment of their Tranſgreſſion: So that their State and Condition is by Sin very much changed.

ged. For whereas before, they conſidered God Almighty as the moſt beneficent Being, who would confer new Bleſſings upon them, proportionably to their Improvements; they now conſider him as a Judge who will exert his Authority, and vindicate the Goodneſs and Juſtice of his Laws, by inflicting ſuch Puniſhments as their Sins deſerve. Nothing therefore remains for them, but like Criminals and Prodigals to leave themſelves wholly to his Mercy, and to depend upon his infinite Pity and Compaſſion. But what Effect this would have, and what the particular Conſequence of it would be, could not be certainly known by the bare Light of Nature and Reaſon; As is evident from the great Uncertainty and Perplexity of the Heathen World. For though they ſeemed to come now and then pretty near the Truth, *viz.* by reſolving all into the Mercy and Goodneſs of God, and hoping there would be a future State, in which every thing ſhould be ſet right; Though this, I ſay, was very agreeable to Reaſon, and in it ſelf an Argument very ſtrong and concluſive; yet for want of the additional Teſtimony of Divine Authority, which might be level to the Capacities of all, and have a ſtronger Influence upon them; it vaniſhed like a Dream, and their Hopes were ſwallowed up by their Fears. But this whole Matter is ſet in its true Light by the Goſpel, and ſo clearly ſtated there, as to afford us ſufficient Anſwers to all the Objections of our Adverſaries.

See Tully's Tuſculan Quæſt. *Book I.*

*Of the unequal* Diſtribution *of things in this preſent Life.*

The moſt unſurmountable Difficulty which gave ſo much Occaſion of Triumph and Inſolence to wicked and prophane Men, and was the Cauſe of ſo much Uneaſineſs and Deſpondency in religious and vertuous Perſons; was the unequal Diſtribution of Good and Evil in this lower World; ſo that the juſt and the unjuſt were equal Sharers of many of the common Gifts of Providence, and in particular Inſtances the latter had oftentimes great Advantages. Thus *David* obſerved the *Proſperity of the wicked*; and Solomon, *that all things came alike unto all*; and the Prophet *Jeremiah*, that *the way of the wicked proſpered, and they were all happy that dealt very treacherouſly*. Were this Life the Whole of Man; it would indeed be extreme difficult, if at all poſſible, to reconcile theſe things with the Proceedings of an infinitely wiſe and good and powerful Being: And therefore this Conſideration

Pſalm LXXIII. 3.
Eccleſ. IX. 2.
XII. 1.

tion is a very concluſive Argument on the other hand, that ſince we are aſſured from the ſtrongeſt Proofs that ſuch an all-perfect Being does exiſt, it is abſolutely impoſſible but He muſt make a final Diſtinction betwixt the Righteous and the Wicked; which ſince He has not done here, there muſt be a future State, wherein it ſhall be done with the utmoſt Exactneſs and Impartiality. The Arguments of the Heathen Moraliſts in this Reſpect therefore, were wholly beſide the Purpoſe: It was like judging of a Fabrick or the Skill of the Artificer, before it is half built; or like determining the general Happineſs or Miſery of a Man's Life, from obſerving a few Days or Hours Proſperity or Adverſity. But Revelation furniſhes us with a clear Anſwer to that great Difficulty.

*Life and Immortality is brought to light by the Goſpel.* 2 Tim.I. 10. We have there the greateſt Aſſurance given us that Death does not put a Period to our Beings, in the viſible Inſtance and Experience of Chriſt's being raiſed from the dead. This one Particular is of ſo great Moment, as to give an entire Turn to the whole Scene of humane Affairs. For with Regard to this, we ſee them in a different Light, and with a contrary View to what they appeared before. It is true indeed that Vertue and Vice are eſſentially different from each other; and, were they freely permitted to produce their genuine Effects, Happineſs would be the unavoidable Conſequence of the one, and Miſery of the other, to all intelligent and free Agents: But where there is ſuch a compounded Creature as Man is, it cannot be, but that the natural Courſe of things muſt be often interrupted and diſturbed. And that 'tis fit they ſhould be put right again, we can very eaſily conclude from Reaſon: But the particular Manner of doing it, and the particular Time in which it ſhall be done, theſe the Father has put in his own Power. Infinite Wiſdom is beſt able to judge of theſe; and it is not for us to know or determine concerning them, till God has revealed them to us. Acts I. 7.

*This Life not the Time for Judgement.*

By ſuch Revelation we are aſſured, that this World is not the Place, nor this Life the Time for Judgement; and therefore it is in vain for us to pretend to pronounce concerning the ſpiritual State of Men, or the Methods of Providence, from what we obſerve concerning them here. God Almighty has appointed a Day in Acts XVII.

which all Men ſhall be called to give an Account of their Behaviour in this preſent Life, which cannot be done till they have finiſhed their Courſe, and therefore it muſt be reſerved to a future State. Wherefore to ſuppoſe Men to be rewarded or puniſhed here according to their juſt Demerits, either by the natural Courſe of things, or by the perpetual Interpoſition of Providence; is to take away all Foundation of a future Judgment, and to anticipate the Proceedings of that ſolemn Day. That it might have been ſo ordered, that Rewards and Puniſhments ſhould have been the conſtant Attendants of Vertue or Vice; there is no doubt: And ſome extraordinary Inſtances there always have been, and perhaps always will be, of ſuch Judgements, to ſerve ſome paticular Ends and Purpoſes:

But the infinite Wiſdom of God ſaw it moſt fit upon the whole, to let things go on in their uſual Courſe to a certain determinate Period, and then to ſeparate them from each other, or to put them upon a new Foot. Thus we obſerve it is in the *natural* World. The whole material Creation is ſubject to certain Laws, which may be ſo interrupted, or in length of time Things may be ſo degenerated, that the Effects of thoſe Laws may be very irregular and confuſed, and they no longer able to ſerve the Purpoſes originally intended by them: And then will it be neceſſary either to reſtore the ſeveral Parts to their primitive State, or to impreſs other Laws upon them, whereby new Heavens and a new Earth will be formed. The ſame may be applied to the *moral* World. It is fit that intelligent and

free

ſree Beings ſhould be leſt to themſelves for a Seaſon, that they may have Opportunities of exerciſing thoſe Powers and Faculties they are endued with; And when the Integrity of the vertuous has been ſufficiently tryed, and the Slothfulneſs of the wicked patiently born with, then will be the time for diſtinguiſhing finally the one from the other. And tho' this may ſeem to us to be at too great a Diſtance, and perhaps be ſome Diſcouragement to vertuous Perſons, and ſome Incouragement to vicious ones; yet it would certainly be worſe if things were otherwiſe. According to that Compariſon of our Saviour's, between the Tares and the Wheat: The Weeds often flouriſh more, and deſtroy ſome Part of the Corn; yet it is not right to pluck them up, leſt the Corn be plucked up with them,

Luk.IX.

but to let them grow together till the Harveſt, and then to ſeparate them, the one for the Barn, the other for the Fire. 'Tis our narrow Conceptions of Time, and partial Conſideration of ourſelves, that make us judge ſo wrong in 2 Pet.iii. 9. theſe Matters; whereas *a thouſand years in the Sight of God are but as yeſterday*, and Mankind bear but a ſmall Proportion amongſt the Rational Creatures in the Univerſe. God therefore is not ſlack (as Men count Slackneſs,) but He will fulfill his Promiſe when the Time is accompliſhed, and all Things ripe for it. This Objection therefore againſt the Courſe of Providence, is altogether as weak, as it would be to object againſt Civil Governments, by which publick and ſtated Seaſons are appointed for the Tryal and Puniſhment of Criminals; that Juſtice is not done, becauſe a Criminal is not puniſhed as ſoon as the Offence is committed, but the Puniſhment is deferred ſo long, that He who ſhould weakly compare the time with a Day or an Hour, would be apt to think that it would never be executed at all.

*The true Uſes to be made of temporal Judgements.*

Thus the Goſpel gives us a clear Solution of this grand Difficulty, and teaches us to conſider the Proſperity of wicked Men and the Adverſity of good Men, in another and a quite different View; and to make very different Uſes of them. We ſee continually how apt we are to judge our Brethren, and to pronounce them righteous or Sinners according to the Good or Evil that befalls them here. If any very great Calamity or extraordinary Accident happens to any Perſon, we are ready to think it a particular Judgement, and that the Hand of Providence interpoſes to puniſh him in ſo ſingular a Manner; juſt as the Barbarians ſaid of St *Paul,* when they ſaw the Viper lay hold of his hand, *Acts* xxviii. 4; *No doubt this Man is a Murtherer, whom though he hath eſcaped the Sea, yet Vengeance ſuffereth not to live.* But this is judging according to the John vii. 24. Appearance only, and not righteous Judgement. Vertue or Vice proceeds out of the Heart; which as we cannot ſee into, ſo we cannot certainly determine about them. The firſt Motions and Intentions of the Mind are inviſible to us, and therefore our Conjectures may be very falſe and groundleſs. For this Reaſon our Saviour is very expreſs in warning Chriſtians againſt making any ſuch Judgement of each other; in the inſtance of the Man that was born

blind, concerning whom the Jews aſk'd this Queſtion (taking it for granted that it was a Puniſhment for ſome Sin,) *who did ſin, this Man* John IX.
*or his Parents, that he was born* 3.
*blind?* The Anſwer takes away the Foundation of all ſuch Enquiries; *neither hath this Man ſinned nor his Parents; but that the Works of God ſhould be manifeſt in him.* Providence had brought this to paſs, for a very different Purpoſe; *viz.* to give Occaſion to Jeſus Chriſt to demonſtrate that He was the Meſſiah, by miraculouſly curing Him. And the ſame may be ſaid of the *Galilæans* whom *Pilate* ſlew as they were offering Luke
Sacrifices in the Temple; and of XIII.
thoſe eighteen upon whom the Tower in *Siloam* fell. In the preſent Courſe of things, ſuch Accidents muſt often happen; Wherefore inſtead of condemning ſuch

Perſons, we ſhould learn from their Example, that we our ſelves are liable to the ſame Evils, and repent leſt we alſo periſh; that is, ſo prepare our ſelves by a timely Reformation of our Lives, that if any ſuch Calamity overtakes us, we may be prepared againſt it. Thus we ſee both from Reaſon and Scripture, that the Afflictions and Sufferings of good Men in this Life, when the Nature and End of them are duly enquired into, cannot properly be ſtiled Evils; For upon the whole they are either overbalanced by a much greater Good, or are converted into or made the Occaſion of extraordinary Advantages to him who chearfully undergoes or rightly applies them. 'Tis very ſeldom, in this preſent Life, that any Man receives more of ſuch Evils at the Hand of God, than he receives

Good. So far as Providence is concerned in them, they are generally no more than Chaſtiſements, to correct our Miſtakes, to put us in Mind of the Uncertainty of all things here, and to excite us to the Love and Practice of Vertue. But if there does happen an extreme Caſe, the Goſpel furniſhes its Profeſſors with extraordinary Motives: Such Perſons *ſhall re-* Mat. XIX. 29. *ceive a hundred fold in this Life*; and their *Affliction which is but for a Moment* (compared with Eternity) *ſhall work for them a* 2 Cor. IV. 17. *far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*. And as for the Afflictions which Men bring upon themſelves, through Careleſsneſs and Violence and Abuſe, (which if duly examined into, will I doubt appear to be the far greateſt Number;) there is no Need of vindicating Providence with Reſpect to theſe; Every Man's own Experience can tell whence they proceed.

*Of the Evil of Puniſhment.* The only remaining Evil to be conſidered, is that of Puniſhment; And this is manifeſtly occaſioned by Sin, and is the juſt and neceſſary Conſequence of it. It is fit and reaſonable that the Practiſe of Vertue ſhould be ſecured by all poſſible Means; and it becomes the Governour of the World to ſuit and apply thoſe Means, in ſuch a Manner as He ſees moſt proper to attain the End propoſed: According to that of the Wiſe Man, *God hath made all things for himſelf*, (or, as it ſhould have been rendred, has made all things corresponding to each other,) *even the wicked for the day of Evil.* Prov. XVI. 4. The firſt End of creating Man, was, that by a due Exerciſe of thoſe Powers and Faculties, which

God has given him, upon their proper Objects, according to the eſſential Difference of things, and in Obedience to the Will of God; he might be happy in ſuch Enjoyment as neceſſarily ariſes from the Practiſe of Vertue, and be moreover entitled to the free Additions of poſitive Rewards, which a moſt beneficent Being can confer upon Him. And had Men acted upon theſe Principles, there would have been no need of any other Law; They would then have been the moſt perfect that their Natures were capable of, by conforming to the eternal Reaſon of things, which is the Rule of Action to God himſelf, and conſequently the moſt acceptable to him. This therefore, as St *Paul* ſays, 1 *Tim.* I, 9, we ought to know and underſtand, *that the Law is not made for a righteous*

*Man, but for the lawleſs and diſobedient.* Whilſt Men are free from Sin, they can be under no Apprehenſion of Puniſhment: It is the Conſciouſneſs of Guilt that creates ſuch Fears, and the Practiſe of Iniquity that is the real Foundation both of the threatning and of the executing any Puniſhment. This being ſo; it is evident, that Men voluntarily bring this Evil upon themſelves: God is not the Author of it, neither can the moſt gracious Being take any Pleaſure in inflicting it. Sinners have made it abſolutely neceſſary; There could be noGovernment without it, no Vindication of Truth and Right, no Reformation of careleſs and inconſiderate Perſons. Wherefore if we would form a true Judgement of the Nature and Uſe of Puniſhment, we muſt conſider it with

Reſpect to *God* who is Governour and Judge of the World; Who, as He knows the Circumſtances and Condition of all his Creatures, ſo He obliges them to no other Laws but what are in themſelves moſt juſt and reaſonable. The firſt Motives to obey them, are ſuch as proceed from the higheſt Love and Good-will; And if theſe will not prevail, it is not fit that his Authority ſhould be deſpiſed, his Laws trampled under Foot, and the obſtinate Sinner quietly permitted to inſult over them. Neither is it fit, with Regard to the *Sinner himſelf*, that He ſhould go on in a continued Courſe of Iniquity, without any Controul or Reſtraint. If He has darkened his own Underſtanding, and ſo far overborn the Dictates of Reaſon and Conſcience, as not to ſee and feel the Reaſonableneſs and Obligation of Vertue; his Mind is in an unnatural and diſeaſed State, and ought to be treated like a diſtempered Body. It muſt firſt be made ſenſible by ſtrong and violent Impreſſions, and afterwards have proper Motives applyed to induce it to practiſe; till its Powers and Faculties are grown ſtrong, and can freely exert themſelves upon their proper Objects. Such Puniſhment as this, is evidently for the Good and Benefit of the Sinner; And therefore there is no more Ground for Complaint in this particular, than for a ſick Perſon who has by his own Careleſsneſs and Inadvertency brought a Diſtemper upon himſelf, to complain of the Harſhneſs of the Remedies, or the Severity of his Phyſician, becauſe they are attended with a great deal of Pain and Uneaſineſs. *Laſtly*, Puniſhment may be conſidered alſo with Reſpect to *Others*, as neceſſary to deter them from doing the like things and falling into the ſame Condemnation. And thus the Example of ſome few Perſons may be of great Uſe to ſave Multitudes, as we ſee practiſed by the beſt civil Governours; and of which there are many Inſtances recorded in Scripture, as brought to paſs by divine Providence. So that here likewiſe Puniſhment has its Uſe, and ought not to be accounted any real Evil; becauſe if it be not Mens own Fault, they may reap Advantage from it. 'Tis the mixing of Cruelty, Revenge or Malice, with the Idea of Puniſhment, which renders it diſagreeable to the true Notions we have of the Perfections of God. For if we ſeparate theſe from it, and ſuppoſe the Puniſhment to be of ſuch a Nature, and inflicted in ſuch a Manner, as is moſt conducive to encourage the Practice of Vertue, and diſcourage the Practice of Vice; it is perfectly conſiſtent with all the Attributes of the Deity. I have but juſt mentioned theſe Particulars, becauſe they are, I think, pretty well agreed on; And if there were no other Sort of Puniſhments than theſe, our Adverſaries would be content. But the great Difficulty with Them, is the Puniſhment threatned to Sinners in the New Teſtament, to be inflicted upon them in a future State.

*Of the Puniſhment threatned to Sinners in the Goſpel.*

This the forementioned Author repreſents as utterly inconſiſtent with the Notions we have of the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God: *viz.* * *that he ſhould will, from all Eternity, that Man ſhould ſin; that This Sin*

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* *Bayles Dict. Remark F*, under the Word *Paulitiens.* Le Principe unique que vous admittez *&c.*

*ſhould be infectious.—The Conſequence of which, is the producing all the Miſeries that humane Life is incident to Here.—and a Hell hereafter, wherein all Men, almoſt, ſhall be eternally tormented, in ſuch a Manner as is moſt terrible and ſhocking.* The former Part of this Objection, ſo far as it concerns God's *willing* that Men ſhould ſin; and concerning the *Infection* of Sin; has been already conſidered. And the latter Part, comes properly under the preſent Head of Diſcourſe; and if duly examined, will appear to be a very unfair Repreſentation of what is ſaid in the New Teſtament, which alone diſcovers this Matter to us. And firſt, as to the Number of Perſons that ſhall be miſerable in a future State; that it will be *almoſt all Mankind*; this is nothing but mere Conjecture,

ure, neither is it any thing to the Purpoſe. The Declaration in Scripture is only in general, that all who obſtinately and finally reject or abuſe the Goſpel-Means of Salvation, every wilful unrepenting Sinner, ſhall be puniſhed with the Puniſhment there threatned; But it mentions no Particulars, or, if it does, it is in ſuch Similitudes as make no ſuch hard Suppoſition. Wherefore it is very uncharitable in Us, to determine ſo ſeverely of our Fellow-Creatures. It is impoſſible for Us, to know the ſpiritual State and Condition of our Brethren. The Tempers and Diſpoſitions of their Minds, are ſecret and inviſible. 'Tis a few external Actions only, that we can judge of. And though *ſome* of *theſe* are ſo plain, that we cannot be deceived in them; yet we cannot know what Mens Converſation has been *upon the whole*, or what future Opportunities ſuch Perſons may have of repenting. At leaſt how Few are They, whoſe Circumſtances with Regard to Religion we have ſufficient Means of knowing, compared with the whole Bulk of Mankind; and much leſs, if compared with all the paſt Ages, or with what may be ſtill to come? 'Tis therefore very unreaſonable to condemn at a venture the far greateſt Part of Men, and to pronounce them ſubject to the higheſt Wrath and Diſpleaſure of God. Neither does the Scripture countenance any ſuch ſevere Cenſure. In the Parable of the ten Virgins, five of them are repreſented as wiſe, and five as fooliſh. Matt. XXV. And in the Parable of the Nobleman who called his ten Servants, and delivered them ten Pounds to occupy in his Ab- Luke XIX.

ſence; One only is ſaid to have laid up His in a Napkin. And in that of the Wedding; amongſt the whole Multitude that were called in from all Parts, there is mention made but of One whom the King ſaw without a Wedding Garment on. Matt. XXII. Whence it is evident that the Deſign of theſe Similitudes was not accurately to determine the Number of good and bad Men, as they will really appear at the great Day of Account; but only to ſhow that all thoſe, how many or how few ſoever they be, who have abuſed the Talents committed to their Charge, ſhall be puniſhed proportionably to their Neglect or Contempt. Neither is this Objection at all to the Purpoſe for which it is brought. It goes upon this weak Suppoſition, that Mankind is the Whole, or, at leaſt, the moſt conſiderable Part of the rational Creatures contained in the Univerſe; and conſequently that the Miſery or Deſtruction of Them, is the Deſtruction of the *Whole*: Whereas in Truth, they are the loweſt and the ſmalleſt Part, no more than the Duſt of the Balance in the material World; compared with thoſe *thouſand thouſand Spirits that miniſter unto God*; *and the ten thouſand times ten thouſand that ſtand before him*. Dan. vii. 10. The Miſery therefore, or the utter Extinction of the whole Race of Mankind, would be no more, with Reſpect to the ſeveral Ranks and Orders of intelligent Beings in the Univerſe; than this Earth's returning to its original Chaos, or its entire Diſſolution, would be with Regard to the Stars and Planets, which are without Number. So that unleſs we could ſee the Connection there will be in another

State between Men and other Intelligences, it is in vain to attempt to reſolve ſuch *particular* Queſtions. But that which is ſufficient to content any reaſonable Perſon in this Matter, is this. Let us ſuppoſe that it could have been put to every Man's Choice, either not to exiſt at all, or to exiſt in the Manner He does now, endued with ſuch Faculties and Powers of Mind and Body, ſubject to ſuch Laws, and capable of ſuch Abuſes; and that the higheſt Happineſs He could be advanced to, and the greateſt Miſery He was to undergo, with the Terms and Conditions of each, were ſet before Him: and that He was left to his Liberty, to chooſe whether He would exiſt in ſuch a State or no. What would it be *reaſonable* for Him to determine in ſuch a Caſe? Either we muſt ſay, that the State of *irrational* Creatures is preferable to that of intelligent Ones; and the Enjoyment of the former, Superiour to the Happineſs of the latter: (Whence it will follow that the meaneſt and moſt inferiour Part of the Creation, every Animal or Vegetable, every Stock or Stone, is in a better and more eligible Condition than Man; nay, that even not to have exiſted at all, had been in it ſelf much preferable to his preſent Exiſtence, with the Proſpect of that Happineſs which Reaſon ſuggeſts, and Revelation confirms to Him:) Or elſe we muſt affirm the preſent State of Man, with the *Views* which Vertue and Religion afford, to be ſuch as a wiſe and ſerious Perſon would willingly embrace, and thankfully receive from God as a gracious Benefactor, notwithſtanding all the Evils and Calamities which it is attended with. This, I ſay, it would be reaſonable to affirm, even though Vertue and Religion were a Task and Burthen *arbitrarily* impoſed upon Men, and all the Afflictions of Life were ſent upon them without any uſeful Deſign: Becauſe every Man has ſuch a natural Deſire of Happineſs, that when he is ſure it is in his own Power to acquire the higheſt Degree of it, there are no Difficulties or Hardſhips which he will not chearfully encounter. But in Truth, the Difficulties which ariſe in the Practiſe of Religion and Vertue, are ſuch as proceed neceſſarily from the different Circumſtances and Conditions of Perſons; and could not be prevented: And the natural Evils and Calamities are ſuch, as the preſent Laws of the Creation neceſſarily ſubject Men to. This Part of the Objection therefore is entirely groundleſs; and ſuppoſes that Happineſs is a mere arbitrary thing, to be conferred at Pleaſure; and that there are no *Means* or *Conditions* neceſſary, nor any *Qualifications* requiſite in the *Subject*.

*Of the Duration of the Puniſhment.*

But that which ſeems to have the moſt Streſs of all laid upon it, is the *Duration* of the Puniſhment to be finally inflicted on wicked Men, *viz.* * that they are to be *eternally* miſerable in the moſt extreme Degree of Miſery, without any Intermiſſion and without End. This is objected to be utterly inconſiſtent with the Juſtice of God; and to bear no Proportion to the Crimes committed. But this is arguing concerning Scripture in the ſame unreaſonable Manner, as in the former Inſtances: 'Tis judging of the plain places by the more difficult, inſtead of the difficult by the more plain ones. Nothing can be more clearly expreſſed in Words, not poſſible to be miſunderſtood by the meaneſt Capacities; than the general Proceedings of the laſt Day. God hath appointed a Day, in which He will judge the World in *Righteouſneſs*: Every Man ſhall then give an Account of his own Works: The Sentence ſhall be ſo juſt and impartial, that all Mouths ſhall be ſtopt: The Sinner himſelf ſhall be forced to confeſs that his Condemnation is juſt; and all the Inhabitants of Heaven and Earth ſhall openly acknowledge, that the Judge of all the World has done right. After ſuch particular and ſolemn Declarations as theſe, of the moſt exact and impartial *Equity*; can there be the

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* See *Bayles* Dict. *Remark E*, under the Word *Paulitiens*.

Acts XVII, 31. Rom.II; 6, 7. Rev. XXII, 12.

leaſt Reaſon to ſuſpect, that there ſhould be any *Injuſtice* done to Men? Muſt not all other Places of Scripture, in which the Circumſtances or Particulars of this Judgement are expreſſed in Terms obſcure or figurative, be referred to, and explained by, theſe clear and infallible Rules which muſt never be departed from? This ſingle Conſideration vindicates the Holy Scripture from all Aſperſions, and removes all the Objections, even ſuppoſing that ſome *particular* Expreſſions could not be accounted for. But we may conſider further, that ſince the things of a future State are, as St *Paul* ſays, ἄῤῥητα, *unutterable*, ſuch as we can have no particular Ideas of, and conſequently no Words fully to expreſs them by; The Happineſs or Miſery of That State can be ſignifyed to us only in general 2 Cor. XII. 4.

Terms, and by ſuch Figures and Similitudes as are taken from the ſeveral Degrees of Happineſs or Miſery Here. And thus we find it in Scripture. The *Happineſs* of Heaven is compared to all the various Things, in which Men *Here* place their greateſt Delight: Which yet are no more than mere Allegories. And the Puniſhment of the Wicked, is likewiſe repreſented after the ſame manner. And as our Saviour converſed with the *Jews*, ſo the Particulars are taken from the known Cuſtoms amongſt That People: As is plain from the v*th* of St *Matthew*; where the three Degrees of Puniſhment, as diſtinguiſhed by the *Jews*, are mentioned in their Order, *viz.* the *Judgement*, the *Council*, and *Hell-fire*. Theſe evidently ſhow, that in a future State there will be Degrees of Puniſhment proportionable to every one's Deſert; The ſevereſt of which, will be That here repreſented under the Character of *Hell-fire*; Which alludes to the *Tophet* mentioned 2 *Kings* xxiii, 10, which was in the Valley of *Hinnom*, where the cruel Cuſtom of ſacrificing Children to *Molech* obtained, and it was therefore defiled by King *Joſiah*; ſo that for the future, a Fire was kept continually burning in it Day and Night; and every thing that was refuſe and vile, was caſt into it. To this Place is That Hell, which is prepared for thoſe degenerate Sinners who are beyond all Means of Conviction and Reformation, compared. Which, as it agrees in Other Circumſtances, ſo does it likewiſe in This, that it will be *eternal*. Which Word we find uſed in Scripture in various Senſes, but eſpecially in theſe

*Two*; either to ſignifie the whole Duration of the Exiſtence of any Being or Thing, in any particular State; or elſe to ſignifie the whole State it ſelf, in which that Perſon or Thing exiſts. Each of which, may be applied to *That Puniſhment*, which is threatned to the Wicked in a future State. But whatever the particular Meaning of theſe, or any other Phraſes relating hereto, be; which were not intended to give us a natural or phyſical Account of theſe Things, but only to be moral Motives or Inducements: That which is of it ſelf ſufficient to encourage the Vertuous, and to diſcourage the Vicious, and to juſtifie the Wiſdom of God, if duly attended to and applied, is; that in diſpenſing both Rewards and Puniſhments in the future eternal State, the moſt ſtrict Regard ſhall be had to the paſt Actions and Behaviour of every Man, and all particular Circumſtances will then be diſtinctly conſidered.

*That Sinners have no Reaſon to expect any thing more to be done for them.*

Thus I have gone through what I at firſt propoſed upon this Subject; and have endeavoured to give ſuch Anſwers to the Objections that have been made, as the Nature and Reaſon of the thing would allow. And now, I think, we may venture to appeal to the impartial Judgement of every ſerious Perſon, in the Words of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, *ch.* v. 3, 4; which are very applicable to the preſent Purpoſe: *And now, O Inhabitants of Jeruſalem, and Men of Judah; judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my Vineyard. What could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I lookt that it ſhould bring forth Grapes, brought* *it forth wild Grapes?* Let every Sinner throughly examine his own State and Condition, what his natural Powers and Faculties are, what they are originally capable of, what additional Means and Opportunities he has had put into his Hands to employ and improve them; And then let him ſhow where the Fault lay, and who is to be charged with the Evil of Sin and with the Conſequences of it. There have been ſome Perſons ſo extravagant as to imagine, that the Divine Providence ought to interpoſe in ſuch a Manner, as actually to hinder every Man either from entertaining ſo much as any Thoughts of ſinning, or, at leaſt, if He attempts to commit any Sin, to hinder him effectually from committing it: So that under an infinitely powerful and good Government, no ſuch thing ſhould ever have been. But this Suppoſition contains in it a great Number of Abſurdities and Contradictions; every one of which, entirely overthrows the Suppoſition itſelf. For if we conſider it with Reſpect to the *Attributes* of *God*; His Power and Goodneſs muſt not be ſeparated from his Wiſdom and Juſtice. So that the Queſtion is not, what infinite Power *can* do; but what is fitteſt and beſt to be done upon the whole: Which is all that is reaſonably to be expected. So alſo with Reſpect to the *Subject*: To have made Man ſo perfect a Creature, as that He ſhould have had no Diſpoſition, or no Opportunity of committing Sin; had been not to have made Man at all, but to have made only the higheſt of intelligent Beings: Whereas there can be no Reaſon aſſigned, why all the Variety of Creatures poſſible ſhould not be made; and each of them dealt with in the beſt Manner, that their ſeveral Stations and Circumſtances will permit. So likewiſe with regard to the *Nature* itſelf of *Vertue* and *Vice*: Theſe are founded in the eſſential and unchangeable Relations of Perſons and Things; and they ſuppoſe a voluntary Compliance or Forbearance in the Agent, from an inward Conviction in the Mind it ſelf, of the Fitneſs or Unfitneſs of the Action. Here therefore there can be no ſuch thing, ſtrictly and properly ſpeaking, as Compulſion or Force of any kind; For theſe are abſolutely inconſiſtent with Liberty; and whenever theſe are exerciſed upon any Perſon, he from thenceforth becomes only a mere paſſive Inſtrument. What is done in This way, is neither virtuous nor vitious in *him*: He has no Satisfaction nor Guilt upon his Mind, and can neither be rewarded nor puniſhed for it. All that is poſſible to be done in order to produce Vertue and to hinder Vice, can be only by a juſt and fair Repreſentation of the different Nature and Effects of each of them, by perpetual Exhortations, repeated Perſuaſions, promiſing of Rewards, and threatning of Puniſhments, and the like: All which, are fitted to induce a free Agent in a moral Way; but they cannot be the efficient Cauſe of any thing done by him. If Men are not influenced by ſuch Means as theſe, they then become utterly uncapable of being made vertuous and happy. And to imagine that God Almighty ſhould by his own abſolute Power, work ſuch a Change in their Minds and Hearts, as that for the future they ſhould become good Men; is indeed to ſuppoſe, not a *moral*, but a *natutural* Creation. Such a Perſon would not be changed but deſtroyed, and a new Perſon created in his Room. And the ſame Abſurdity follows with regard to the *Powers* and *Faculties* of Men's *Minds*. To ſuppoſe that they ſhould be perpetually over-ruled, and hindred from producing their genuine Effects; is the ſame thing as not to be endued with them at all. Thus a vicious Perſon cannot by any external Means be hindred from thinking or doing wickedly, but ſuch as are equivalent to deſtroying the Powers and Faculties of his Mind. So long as He continues of an obſtinate Temper and Diſpoſition, it is impoſſible to make him ſee the Beauty, and underſtand the Truth of Religion and Vertue; And ſo long as He is reſolved not to conform to the Rules of them in his Practiſe, he cannot be made to do ſo; For then, in each of theſeCaſes, it would not be ſo much his own Underſtanding and Practice, as another's Underſtanding and Practiſing for him. *Laſtly*, The ſame may be alſo ſaid of the *Means* of *Conviction*. It is a very great Miſtake, to think that if there could be greater Evidence given of the Truth of Religion, it would prevent Men from falling into ſuch groſs Sins, and prevail with them to embrace and obey its Precepts: For both Reaſon and Experience ſhows us the contrary. There is a certain Sort of Evidence and a certain Degree of it, which is both proper and ſufficient to convince every rational and ſerious Perſon: And all Others are uncapable of Conviction; and therefore it is to no Purpoſe to apply it to them. the Fault does not lie in the *Teſtimony*, but in the *Subject*: And a Man who has deſtroyed his Sight,

may as reaſonably complain that the Sun is not light enough, becauſe he cannot ſee to walk by it. Such Complaints as theſe, are nothing but mere Excuſes: And if ſuch unreaſonable Expectations were really gratified, this would be ſo far from producing what is imagined, that it would much more probably produce the contrary Effect. The Jews are a remarkable Inſtance of this. *Maſ*-
Matt. XII. 38. *ter, we would ſee a ſign of thee*, was their Demand; when greater Signs than what they asked, were done before their Eyes every Day. Had therefore their unreaſonable Requeſt been granted, they might have been confounded; but there is no Reaſon to think they would have been convinced, but only have ſought out for another ſtill more abſurd Pretenſe. Thus we ſee that there is no End of making Suppoſitions of what *might* be done,

in order to have the State both of Perſons and Things better; and that all the Hypotheſes of Mens framing, are attended with vaſtly more and greater Incoveniences, than the way things are already in. Whence we ought to conclude, that all things are under the Direction of an infinitely wiſe and good Providence; which, having all the various Changes of them in one View, orders them to the beſt Advantage poſſible.

*The Concluſion.*

I ſhall conclude the Whole with this one Inference, which plainly follows from the Principles hitherto laid down: *viz.* That as all the Parts of the *material* World are ſubject to thoſe Laws which are preſcribed to them by divine Providence, the regular Execution of which Laws forms One convenient and beautiful Fabrick; So likewiſe are the ſeveral Parts of the *rational* World, (*viz.* every intelligent Agent,)

gent,) under the Inſpection and Government of the ſame good Providence. Which Conſideration is alone ſufficient to ſupport the vertuous Perſon in every State, and to make the vicious ſelf-condemned. For ſince Virtue and Vice are founded in the eſſential Differences of Perſons and Things, and have a natural and neceſſary Tendency in themſelves to make Men happy or miſerable; but the Exiſtence of the Perſons and Things themſelves are arbitrary, and depend entirely upon the Will of the Supreme Being: It cannot be, but that the ſame infinitely wiſe and good and powerful Being, who gave them ſuch Powers and Faculties, and ſuited the reſpective Objects to them; will have exact Regard to their Compliance or Noncompliance with thoſe eternal Rules, and make them the Meaſure of his Diſpenſations of Rewards

and Puniſhments; So that the *Ends of Providence*, and the *Nature of Things*, muſt be finally the ſame. This Foundation cannot be ſhaken by all the Artifices of wicked and prophane Men; becauſe 'tis laid upon a Rock. The Tendency of every one of their Hypotheſes, is in Reality to ſubvert the eſſential Difference of Vertue and Vice: For they are all calculated to ſerve this ſingle Purpoſe, *viz.* to caſt off the Guilt of Mens Sins from themſelves. But, as the Prophet ſays, they may as eaſily make *Light* to be *Darkneſs*, and *Darkneſs Light*, *Bitter* to be *Sweet*, and *Sweet Bit-* Iſ. v, 20.
*ter*. And if they will not be convinced of This ſooner, it will be made appear at the great Day of Account, that what the ſame Prophet ſays of the Jews, may proportionably be applied to all Mankind; that *God* ver. 1, 2.
*has planted them as a Vineyard in a very fruitful Hill, which He*

*fenced, and gathered out the Stones thereof, and planted it with the choiceſt Vines, and built a Tower in the midſt of it, and made a Winepreſs therein ; and He looked that it ſhould bring forth* Grapes, *and it brought forth wild* Grapes. They have fruſtrated his Intentions, and rendred all he has done for them uſeleſs : Therefore they have juſt Reaſon to expect, *he ſhould take away their Hedge, pull down their Wall, and tread them under foot.* Let every Sinner examine himſelf, and impartially declare, if this be not his Caſe. And if it be, let him endeavour to eſcape this Judgement, before it be too late, and the Things that belong to his Peace be hid from his Eyes.

*FINIS.*

FH
MVSEVM
BRITANNICVM
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